

Auroville Community Participation Framework



Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning,
in association with the Auroville Integral Sustainability Institute

September 2015 - January 2016

PROJECT TEAM

This project was undertaken by ten students from the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at Queen's University of Kingston, Ontario, Canada, as part of their capstone project course. These students travelled to Auroville, India to complete a project that addressed a local planning and development concern.



Map of India displaying the project location in Auroville, in the province of Tamil Nadu.



Project Team from left to right:

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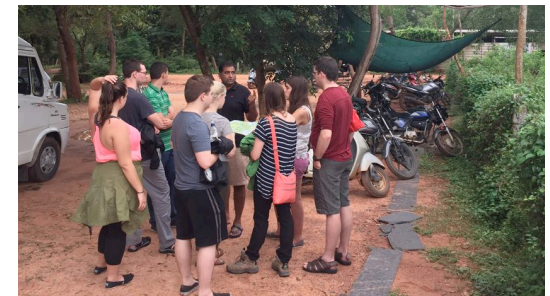
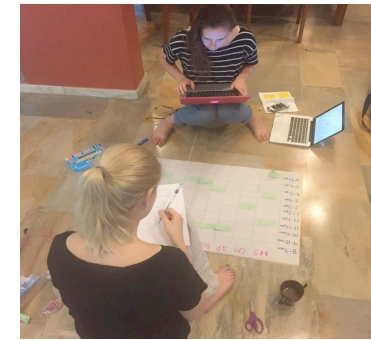
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Township of Auroville with a Community Participation Framework that will allow for a consistent and transparent collaborative planning process. The framework is based on a set of guiding principles and it functions as a step-by-step guide to involving the community in the planning and development process. A pilot study, using a local planning issue, was conducted to test the framework. Findings from the pilot study resulted in modifications to the framework and recommendations concerning both the pilot study topic and participation more generally.

Prior to the project team's arrival in Auroville, an extensive literature and document review was conducted. This included research on: community participation techniques, framework best practices, and community participation theory, Aurovilian planning documents, and planning research from Auroville. Through this analysis, the project team was able to gain an understanding of Auroville's current community participation practices, its governance structure, as well as an awareness of previous research on community participation in Auroville. Preliminary research was conducted in the form of six semi-structured interviews and a brief questionnaire, which was dispersed through Auroville's Intranet. The cumulative results of this research provided the team with further insight into Auroville's context, and allowed for the development of an initial community participation framework to meet the needs of the community. In consultation with the client, this framework was used to create a preliminary plan for the pilot study that incorporated a high degree of flexibility, as significant changes to the strategy were expected once the team arrived in Auroville.

Upon the team's arrival in Auroville, a focus group was conducted with key individuals in the planning and community participation fields. The purpose of the focus group was to receive feedback on both the framework and the pilot study. Semi-structured interviews and systematic self observations were also conducted in Auroville. This research greatly influenced the framework and led to direct changes in its content. The breadth of the pilot study widened through focus group discussions and in-situ interviews; its scope grew into a broader visioning study.

The community participation framework underwent a number of changes as a result of the interviews, focus groups, and the pilot study. Multiple sections were added to the report including, "What is a framework?" and "Who is this framework for?" The need for more focused public meetings was identified during the interview process, which prompted the addition of a section that includes tips for effective facilitation. The wording of the document was also changed to include plain language. For example, the types of engagement were renamed to "Tell", "Listen", "Discuss", and "Work Together" rather than the more technical "Inform", "Consult", "Involve", and "Collaborate". The "Choosing Techniques" section was expanded to better reflect the importance of using a variety of participation techniques in order to hear from diverse groups and identify which techniques are most appropriate for a given situation.

The proposed community participation framework is designed to be a stand-alone tool that can be pulled out of the report if desired. The framework starts by establishing context; who should be using it and when it should be used. Seven guiding principles form the basis of the framework, which were derived through research and through discussions with Aurovilians. These guiding principles are: be inclusive, build capacity, be proactive, make it enjoyable, provide structure and be transparent, be accountable, and be adaptive. Guiding Principles are foundational values that must guide each step when developing a community participation plan. This section is followed by tips on facilitation. The community participation toolkit represents the "how-to" portion of the framework and is presented in seven steps:

- Step 1. Setting Intentions
- Step 2. SWOC Analysis
- Step 3. Identifying Impacted and Interested Groups
- Step 4. Choose the Type of Engagement
- Step 5. Choose Techniques
- Step 6. Communicate and Implement the Plan
- Step 7. Evaluate the Community Engagement Process: Monitor, Report, Feedback

The community participation framework has the potential to standardise the way planners interact with residents and contribute to re-establishing trust. As a result, the implementation of the proposed framework is our primary recommendation, as it will lead to the creation of a structured and predictable participation process. Other recommendations for the implementation of the participation framework in Auroville include: 1) make the framework an online tool, in order to build capacity, 2) the framework should be first used for several small scale projects before it is applied to larger community-wide projects, and 3) ensure that the framework adapted as circumstances in Auroville change.

The pilot study, a test of the proposed framework, occupied the majority of the team's time in Auroville. The participation exercise centred on the question: "What community features do you envision in Residential Sectors 1 & 2?" As recommended by the framework, a multi-method approach was used to gain community feedback. Aurovilians were informed about upcoming events through multiple platforms including radio, emails, posters, and newsletter advertisements. Major events conducted by the project team included three information kiosks, two focus groups, an online questionnaire, a workshop, and 1 on 1 interviews with underrepresented group.

Information kiosks were held at three locations across the community. The kiosks engaged Aurovilians in informal conversations about community features, and generated over 140 responses, which were categorised into four themes and twelve sub-themes. These sub-themes were then listed in an online survey that asked Aurovilians to select their preferred community features. Additionally, a focus group on community features sought out the perspective of Auroville youth, an underrepresented group in the community.

The project team led a workshop that used 2 engagement techniques: "dot democracy" and "open spaces". The team presented a number of potential discussion topics to the group. These topics were generated using data gathered from previous engagement events. Participants each cast 3 votes to narrow down the choices to 4 topics, which were then discussed using the open spaces technique. Each theme was given a facilitator to guide discussion and a note taker to accurately record the discussion. This exercise resulted in in-depth conversations that centred on feasibility and implementation, which yielded more focused data than

previous participation events. The intention of the pilot study was not only to test the proposed community participation framework, but also to act as a fruitful participation exercise for Auroville within the limited time that the team was in the township. The team developed a portrait of the sort of features and amenities residents desire in their neighbourhoods. Six recommended next steps were developed for the pilot study to ensure a strategy for community feature management in Residential Sectors 1 & 2 is implemented. These next steps are:

1. Clarify and communicate intentions for how this data will be used.
2. Analyse participation data and synthesise with planning knowledge.
3. Create an implementation strategy.
4. Create a rough draft report that includes information about how participation data was used.
5. Utilise feedback to refine documents into a final report.
6. Implement the plan.

Five general recommendations on conducting participation events were also generated as a result of the pilot study and our research.

1. Ensure all events are accessible.
2. Be transparent throughout the entire process.
3. Use a diversity of events, methods, and techniques.
4. Be mindful when choosing location and techniques.
5. Set roles and intentions.

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Project Members: Benjamin Goodge, Brandon Henderson, Dominik Matusik, Caroline Morrow, Michael Norris, Asia Pineau, Joanna Salsberg, Heather Scrannage, Benjamin Segal-Daly, Thomas Spolsky



Section 1



Introduction

1.1 Report Introduction

This report was prepared by graduate students at the School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. The international project team was comprised of ten students in their second year of the Master of Planning programme. The project involved the development of a community participation framework in Auroville, Tamil Nadu, India. This report consists of two main parts: the framework and the inaugural pilot study. It also includes all background research, methodology and theory relevant to the project.

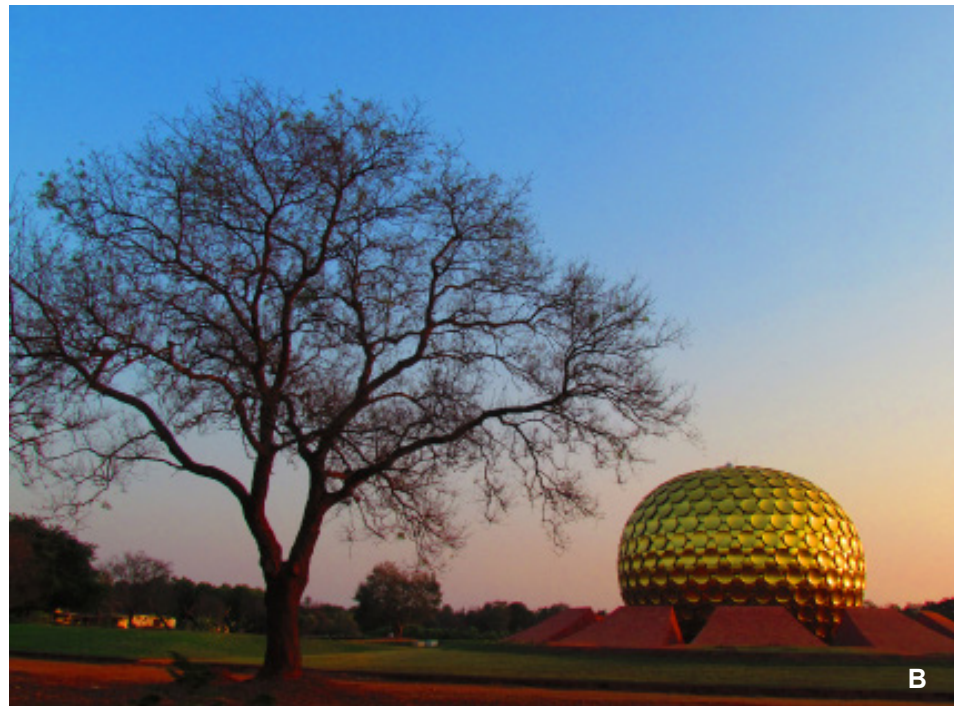


Figure 1.1: The Matrimandir grounds sit at the centre of the community.
Photo courtesy of Lalit Kishor Bhati

1.2 Background Information: Auroville

Auroville is an experimental community located in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, just north of Puducherry. It was founded in 1968 by followers of Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa (known as the Mother) based on their teachings and values. Auroville was designed as a “universal town” dedicated to achieving the goal of “human unity” (Auroville 2014c).

While Auroville emerged as a spiritual idea, its realisation as a physical town was an immediate objective of its first residents who came from diverse backgrounds. In 1966, the Galaxy Plan gave a tangible form to the town, which was designed for a population of 50,000 (Auroville 2014d). Auroville, however, has grown at a gradual pace, with its current population totalling 2,345 individuals. It maintains an unconventional non-hierarchical governing structure and remains selective about who can become an Aurovilian.

1.2.1 Governance

Governance in Auroville is non-hierarchical and based on consensus. The governing body is the Auroville Foundation as per the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988, which sets a framework for the town’s relationship with the Indian government. The Foundation’s governing board sets overarching policy direction and liaises between various organisations within Auroville and the central and state governments (Auroville 2014e). Auroville conducts fundraising through the Auroville Foundation and has received grants from various levels of government as well as UNESCO.

Internally, however, there is very little rigid governing structure. The Residents’ Assembly (RA) is the final decision-making body within Auroville and is comprised of all Aurovilians over the age of 18. The Residents’ Assembly Service (RAS) manages, organises and facilitates the RA. Additionally, there are numerous volunteer working groups within Auroville that are responsible for various tasks and projects (Auroville 2014b).

1.2.2 Planning

The group responsible for planning and development in Auroville has two names: “L’Avenir d’Auroville” or the “Town Development Council”. This group approves all new construction and works towards implementing the 1966 Galaxy Plan, as well as the 2000 Master Plan (Auroville 2014g).

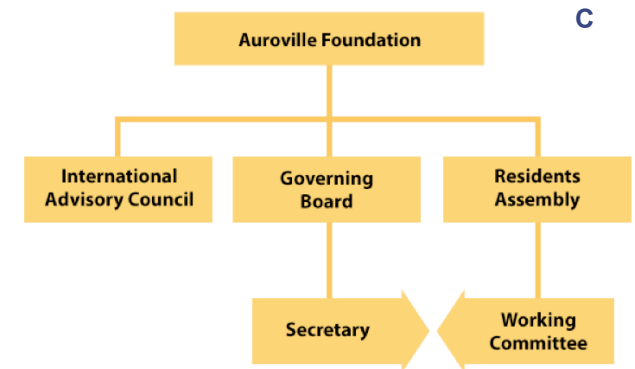


Figure 1.2: Auroville’s governing structure.



Figure 1.3: A model of the 1966 Auroville Galaxy Plan.

There is a long history of planning in Auroville. French architect Roger Anger created the Galaxy Plan based on a sketch by the Mother (see Figure 1.4). Since its founding, Auroville has been home to a large number of architects who were attracted to the town's enthusiasm for experimental architectural concepts (Auroville 2014f). The Galaxy Plan is designed for a town of 50,000 people. Auroville is very slowly growing towards this goal. From interviews, we heard a number of explanations for this slow population growth, ranging from the complex nature of its decision-making processes, to its selective membership criteria, and to disagreement over whether or not this is even a desirable goal.

1.2.3 Current Planning Context

The Galaxy Plan is considered the general blueprint for development by Auroville's planners. There is, however, some disagreement about its interpretation. At the most basic level, the plan calls for four zones: residential, international, industrial and cultural - each with specific characteristics and densities. The Matrimandir grounds and the Banyan Tree, the geographical and spiritual centre of the community, are town focal points. Services are to be focused on a ring road and it is planned for an extensive green belt to surround the township (Auroville 2014d).

Implementation of the plan has proven to be problematic for a number of reasons as we heard from numerous architects, planners and community members within Auroville. For one, the town does not yet own all of the lands covered by the Galaxy Plan and acquiring them has become increasingly difficult (Auroville Foundation, 2001, 2.2.2-3). Disagreements over the specifics of the plan, or over whether the plan has any relevance at all, are also pervasive. Coupled with the complex nature of decision-making in Auroville, this has meant a very slow and incremental rate of development that tends to be piecemeal and often disjointed. As a result, there is a considerable degree of disillusionment and cynicism among some Aurovilians.

1.2.4 Community Participation

Because of its origins as a town based on a spiritual and intellectual ideal, Aurovilians have a strong history of engagement and activism. However, the above-mentioned issues have resulted in a souring of attitudes

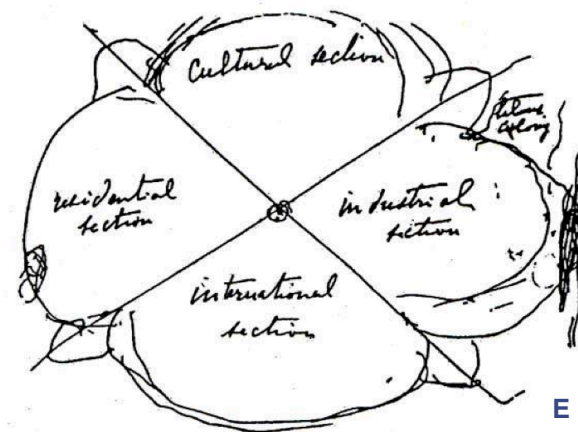


Figure 1.4. An early sketch of the galaxy concept created by the Mother

towards planning. We have heard that repeated attempts at reform have not been fruitful. These have ranged from previous participation projects conducted by both outsiders and internal working groups, as well as more general attempts to reform Auroville's governing structure. Residents' Assembly meetings have not been particularly well-attended, with an average attendance of approximately 100 Aurovilians. Furthermore, decisions made during the general meetings are not always acted upon. As a result, planning proposals are often viewed with skepticism.

However, there is also an enormous opportunity for truly collaborative planning in Auroville. There are a large number of residents with experience or an interest in planning and the town's future. The current community participation process tends to be somewhat inconsistent. There is a lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of different groups within the community participation process.

Currently, developments go through an approvals process in which the L'Avenir d'Auroville collects feedback for a set amount of time. However, many Aurovilians are unsure how or if their feedback is considered during this process. Sentiments regarding the current participation system in Auroville demonstrate a need for further collaboration between planners and Aurovilians.

1.3 Objectives

There is a strong foundation of engagement in Auroville, but from our research we learned that it requires more consistency, continuity, and focus. Our community participation framework is a step-by-step process, based on a set of guiding principles. It is designed to be applied in any planning or development situation and can also be adapted to other topics. It details methods for determining the appropriate type of engagement, identification of affected groups, techniques for participation and a feedback mechanism for the overall process. The document is designed to be used by any individual or group seeking to create a development in Auroville and can be adapted to fit specific contexts and circumstances. The end result should be a consistent and transparent participation process conducive to collaborative planning in Auroville. Details of the framework are described in Chapter 4.

To inaugurate the framework, we used a pilot study to test the framework's efficacy as it relates to Auroville. The project involved determining the community features that the public envisions in Residential Sectors 1 & 2. In applying the framework to the pilot study, we used multiple methods of engagement and modified the framework throughout based on our experiences and the feedback we have received. It is intended that the data we collected be shared with both planners and the community on the assumption that the work we started will be continued. Chapter 6 of this report contains a list of recommendations related to both the framework and the pilot study as well as what the next steps should be. A comprehensive discussion of the pilot study is found in Chapter 5. Chapters 2 through 4 discuss the methodology, development and implementation of the framework.

The following report was developed with the intention of being read in chronological order, as each section provides valuable information regarding the creation of the framework. All of the above mentioned chapters have an area of focus, and when combined they provide a detailed account of the development process and offer a rational for the resulting community participation framework.



Project team meeting to discuss the pilot study



Project team schedule for an average day in Auroville



Section 2



Methodology

2.1 Introduction to Methodology

This report utilised a variety of methods to create a community participation framework that addresses the needs of Auroville. Our research began with a literature and document review of numerous plans and frameworks which illustrated how participation works in jurisdictions around the world. Our next step involved relating the lessons learned to Auroville which necessitated extensive research into how the community functions. We utilised a diverse range of methods in synthesising these two facets of our research including document reviews, interviews, surveys, and personal observations. The result of this research was a preliminary framework for Auroville.

Upon arrival in Auroville, we were able to test the initial framework on a pilot study. During the conduct of this project, numerous participation techniques were used and we developed a deeper understanding of what aspects of the framework were likely to be successful in the township. The pilot study not only allowed us to collect valuable data and develop recommendations, but also influenced the framework itself, resulting in the final product presented in this report. The following chapter will discuss the methodology used for this project.



Project team on a tour of the International Zone in Auroville

2.2 Methods Employed Prior to Arriving in Auroville

2.2.1 Literature Review and Document Review

2.2.1.1 Aurovillian Documents

In order to familiarise ourselves with Auroville's unique context, we conducted a comprehensive literature review which informed us of the current practices in planning and participation in the township. These ranged from general reading about Aurovilian values to more technical documents regarding planning. Together, these documents helped determine what shape the preliminary framework might take.

Documents analysed for this document review include:

- Auroville Vision, Charter & To be a True Aurovilian
- Auroville Universal Township Master Plan Perspective: 2025 (2011)
- Directions for Growth (Asia Urbs) Document 2003-4
- Detailed Development Plan for Sector 1 & 2 (L'Avenir d'Auroville, Luis Fedduchi)
- Residential Zone Brainstorming Session 2014
- Integral Sustainability Platform (ISP) Document 2010-11
- Auroville City Area- Land Suitability and Land Use Proposal April-May 2014
- Auroville Universal Township Master Plan Perspective: 2025 (2001)
- A Review of Auroville's Building Application System, Helen Eveleigh (2013)
- Retreat 2015 "Elephants in the Room"
- Full Report 2015 "Auroville Retreat"
- AVSIS: Auroville Sustainability Indicator System (2013)
- Capturing the Spirit of the Crown: Considerations for Social Spaces in Auroville (2012)

The literature review gave us a broad understanding of i) the unique values and structure of Auroville, ii) the current planning context and iii) what had previously been done. These documents were integral to the development of our framework in a manner consistent with Aurovilian values and realities.

2.2.1.2 International Best Practices & Case Studies

This portion of the literature review involved researching various documents from around the world to gain further knowledge of community participation in practice. These documents can be classified into two separate types: participation frameworks and participation processes.

The goal of the former was to explore the theoretical foundations of community participation as well as to observe established best practices. Our previous research imparted upon us the uniqueness of Auroville's context and we recognised that documents from elsewhere may have limited applicability. However, we also discovered themes in Auroville that overlap with planning issues around the world. Therefore, we deemed it valuable to examine what types of frameworks other jurisdictions have been using. In this capacity, we analysed documents in use by Canadian municipalities like Victoria, Waterloo, Wood Buffalo, Oakville, Fort Saskatchewan and Strathcona County. International examples included frameworks from Cape Town, Melbourne and Seattle.

Examining case studies of actual participation plans was also a valuable aspect of our early research. We took cases from numerous jurisdictions of varying sizes and extracted themes that we determined would be applicable in Auroville based on our research of Aurovilian documents. The goal of this was to determine what makes a good community participation plan and to then apply those lessons during our time in Auroville. Ultimately, 6 cases were deemed to be the most relevant, consisting of two from Canada (Regina and British Columbia) and four international cases (Golden, Melbourne, Ireland, and Italy).

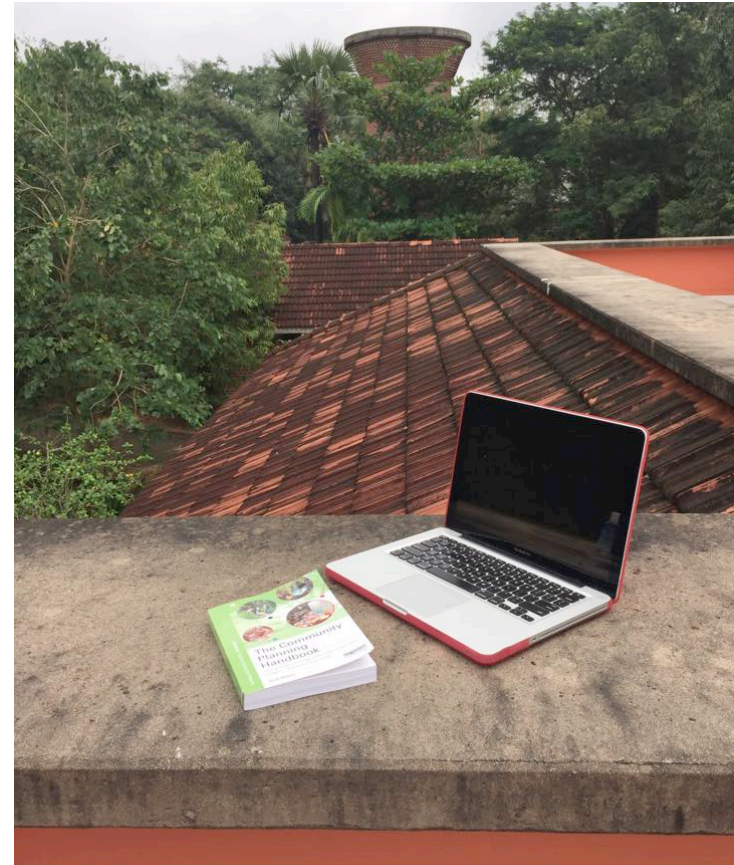
2.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants that live in Auroville before the team departed from Canada. These interviews provided additional insight into the Aurovilian context, which

was essential to shaping our pre-departure work. This interview method is advantageous because interviewers have access to a base list of questions, but maintain enough flexibility to explore potential tangential lines of questioning that may not be possible in more structured formats. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow for the identification of gaps in knowledge and the collection of a variety of opinions on a particular subject (Dunn, 2010). For a list of questions asked within these interviews, see Appendix A.

2.2.3 Questionnaires: Current Views on Community Participation

Questionnaires that use a variety of qualitative and quantitative questions are common to mixed-methodology research (McGuirk and O'Neill, 2010). For this report, a 12-question questionnaire was dispersed via Auroville's Intranet. The project team sought to gain insight into residents' opinions of current community participation practices, as well as how these practices might be improved in the future. Questions were formulated for the survey in partnership with the client and drew from the results of the semi-structured interviews and literature review. Both closed and open-ended questions were employed in order to collect a wide variety of data. In total, 82 completed questionnaires were retrieved through the survey program "Formstack". A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B.



Work station at the Afsanah guesthouse

2.3 Methods Employed in Auroville

The Framework (Methods)

2.3.1 Focus Group with Key Individuals

Upon arrival, the project team gave an initial presentation to a small group of Aurovilians. The attendees were those deemed likely to utilise the framework and included members of RAS, TDC and other working groups. The focus group, therefore, was able to provide unique insights into the applicability and usefulness of our initial proposal. During the meeting, the project team presented the framework and background research that was conducted. Participants were also asked to engage in a participatory exercise that involved working through the framework itself. This exercise enabled the team to identify initial deficiencies and gain insight into how the framework would function during our pilot study. Based on the discussion at this focus group session, the framework was refined and the scope of the pilot project was widened.

2.3.2 Semi-Structured and Unstructured Interviews

After the initial presentation, 12 interviews were conducted with a variety of individuals from Auroville. This allowed us to delve further into some of the questions and concerns raised in the initial focus group. These interviews ranged from semi-structured to completely unstructured. Variation in interview methodology was a reflection of the diversity of our interviewees and their relationship to Auroville. Due to this variation, we felt it was not possible to create a standard list of questions. Instead, conversations were allowed to develop naturally with no restrictions on impromptu questions. The interviews took place in a variety of locations, including offices, private homes and public spaces, and ranged in length from approximately thirty minutes to one and a half hours. The project team used these interviews to inform both the Community Participation Framework as well as the pilot project.

2.3.3 Site Visits and Systematic Self Observations

A number of sites were visited in order to gain a better understanding of Auroville. Upon arrival, the team underwent a comprehensive tour, guided by our client, which deepened our spatial understanding of Auroville. We also explored and evaluated a number of potential sites for our community participation events. Site observation is an important step in understanding the project area as this adds to the researcher's understanding of the context of a particular space (Kearns, 2010). Participant observation was employed within the research and conducted through unstructured walking tours that explored how space is used in Auroville, as well as informal conversations with residents. Participant observation is valuable because it allows the researcher to gather complementary and contextual evidence that can be used to support their findings in previous methods. It also provides an opportunity for the researcher to act as a participant in the space and understand its context (Kearns, 2010).

The Pilot Study (Methods)

2.3.4 Pilot Study Advertisements and Posters

A variety of methods and techniques were used to inform the broader Auroville community about participation events. Radio, posters, online and newsletter advertisements were sent out/put up in the community to inform individuals of the project team's upcoming events.

2.3.5 Information Kiosks

Information kiosks were used as a method to determine the general views and opinions of the Auroville community. These informed both the pilot project and the overall participation framework. Information kiosks are interactive booths that allow passersby to express their

opinions on a particular topic in a creative way (Wates, 2014). In Auroville, the project team set up posters that explained the pilot study question in frequented spaces. The question was, 'What Community Features Do You Want in Residential Sectors 1 & 2'. The team encouraged residents to express their thoughts and opinions about the question through sticky notes that were then posted on a board visible to all.

Information kiosks were conducted at three locations in Auroville, each lasting approximately two hours. The first location was at the Pour Tous Distribution Centre (PTDC) early in the morning on December 4th, 2015. The second was in front of the Solar Kitchen, a popular lunch venue, at noon on the same day. The third was in Creativity, a community within the pilot study area, on December 5th in the morning. Thematic analysis was used to process the information generated from the information kiosks. All the sticky notes collected were split into repeating themes and then further broken down into sub-themes.

2.3.6 Focus Group with Youth

A focus group was conducted with a small group of youth in Auroville to gain insight on what community features they want within their communities. In total, ten youth aged 12-15 attended the focus group. Originally, the project team planned to conduct a visioning exercise with the group using drawings. However, the participants proved unreceptive to this format, which was designed for a younger audience. Therefore, the team modified the session into an unstructured focus group that was essentially a conversation about what community features they desired. The project team recorded their suggestions and opinions on sticky notes that were then posted on a table. The information derived from the focus group was analysed for themes, which were then broken into subthemes. The results of this session informed future pilot study events and techniques, such as the workshop and questionnaire.

2.3.7 Questionnaire Regarding Public Opinion(s)

An additional questionnaire was employed prior to the workshop. This questionnaire was distributed in conjunction with the RAS and its purpose was to further gauge community views regarding the pilot

project topic and also to advertise the workshop. E-mail was used to distribute the questionnaire to community members who lived within the Residential Zone of Auroville, and was personalised for each individual.

This questionnaire consisted of two questions. One question asked people to select any number of additional themes to add to those collected from previous methods. The list of answers was derived from the comprehensive list of themes/topics identified in the interviews, focus groups, and information kiosks. The second question was open-ended and allowed people to provide their own suggestions regarding the pilot study topic. The questionnaire was used to validate the findings within other research methods as well as discover new insights into the pilot study themes. A copy of the email and survey can be found in Appendix B.

2.3.8 Workshop

The Open Spaces technique was used for the workshop. Open Spaces is commonly used to encourage a diverse group of people to collaborate and communicate in order to come to consensus around a particular theme or issue (Algonquin College, 2007). This method is further described in the list of techniques found in Appendix C.

Within the workshop, attendees were provided with themes that were identified from the information kiosks, interviews, and focus groups and asked to think about which themes they might wish to discuss or learn about. This complete list of 13 themes was then narrowed down to four priority themes through a dot democracy exercise (a visual form of voting). At this point the attendees then moved to whichever theme they wanted to discuss the most. If participants felt that they had lost interest in the conversation, they moved to a different theme and contributed to that group. The discussion at each table was monitored by a facilitator who helped the group adhere to ground rules and ensure that everyone had a chance to voice an opinion. The facilitation method employed was light; the facilitator only prompted the discussion if it was stalling or not being productive. The information gained from the workshop was provided to the Auroville Integral Sustainability Institute, as well as the RAS and L'Avenir d'Auroville and also emailed to participants.

2.4 Conclusion

Methods that were employed prior to the project team's departure to Auroville were primarily about developing an understanding of the local context. This was particularly important given Auroville's unique characteristics. As a result, early methods were heavily focused on analysing documents and literature. Additionally, efforts were made to develop a fool proof understanding of community participation practice around the globe. Developing our initial framework was a matter of synthesising these two streams of thought.

Upon arriving in Auroville, we incorporated methods that would continue developing our understanding of local conditions (such as site and participant observation) in order to refine our initial framework proposal. Afterwards, divergent methods were employed during the conduct of the pilot study. As per our seventh principle, methods were mixed and applied adaptively. This approach allowed for three of the four types of data triangulation to occur: multiple sources, methods, and investigators which increased the results' rigour and trustworthiness (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). Using more than one method has also allowed the researchers to identify gaps in knowledge and reaffirm findings discovered by different data sources (Axxin and Pearce, 2006).

Ensuring that suitable methods were used when appropriate was a significant portion of our work. Different methodologies can often lead to radically divergent results even when working with similar data. Considering which methods were likely to yield the most productive results, as well as ensuring that a variety of methods were employed, minimised error and safeguarded against skewed data. The framework presented in this document is the result of rigorous methodological research as well as experience through a trial and error basis in Auroville. These factors strengthened our framework at each step of the process and resulted in a refined final proposal.



Break during the project team's first focus group in Auroville



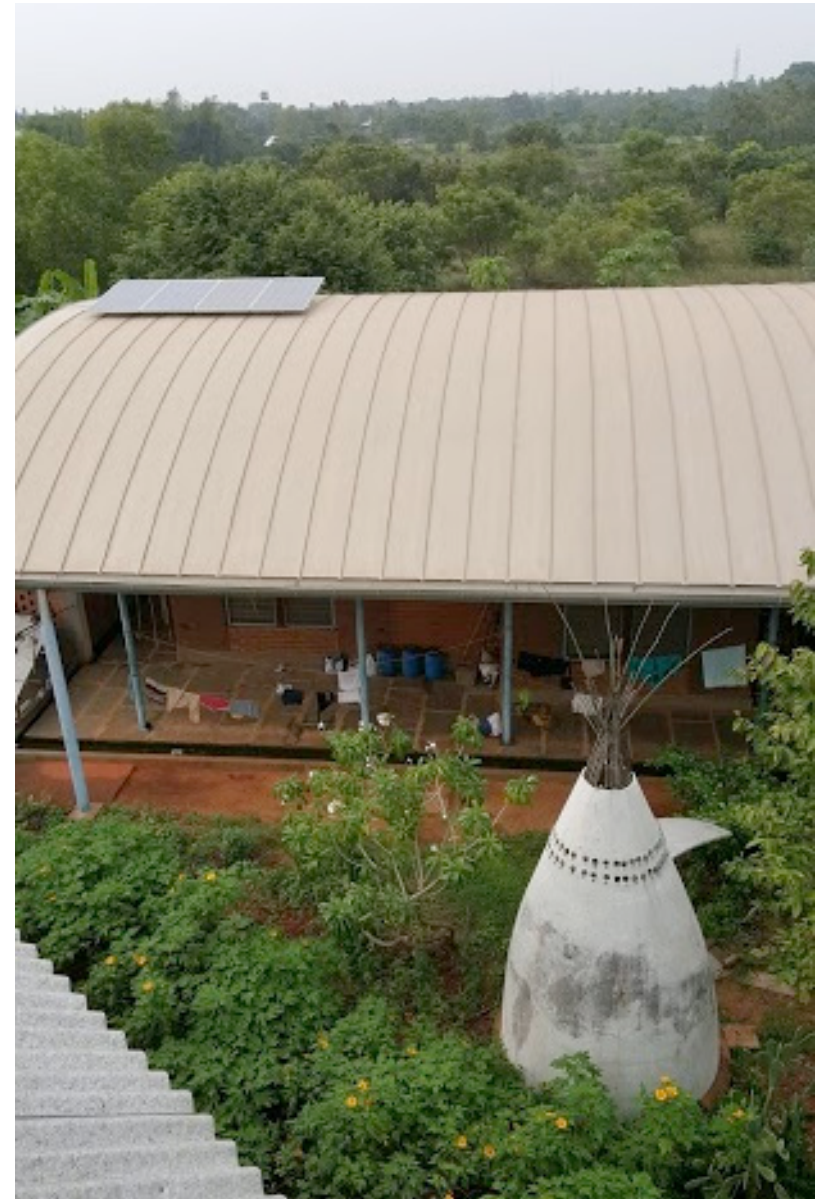
Section 3



Framework Development

3.1 Introduction to Background Research

Community participation frameworks are tools used to help ensure that decision-making bodies engage effectively and transparently with the public. Frameworks function as a guide to the entire process and aid with the creation, implementation, and reporting of a participation plan. The Auroville Community Participation Framework was developed through research on community participation theory, interviews and surveys with Aurovilians, case studies of participation plans, and a review of participation frameworks. By conducting this research we were able to understand how successful frameworks and participation plans operate. We drew from these successes in order to tailor a framework to Auroville. Using themes collected from the interviews we adapted the framework to suit the local context and address participation needs in Auroville. This chapter will discuss how our research informed the framework.



View from the American Pavilion in Auroville's International Zone

3.2 Background Research: Themes from Interviews & Surveys

A variety of themes emerged through the analysis of interviews and surveys. These themes helped inform us of the current state of community participation in Auroville and allowed us to tailor the framework to the local context. While many themes emerged, five were most prevalent: transparency, consensus, techniques, feedback, and implementation. The following is a discussion of how these themes were used to develop the Auroville Community Participation Framework.

1. Transparency

Transparency was integral to developing the community participation framework for Auroville. The step-by-step guide nature of the framework introduces process transparency into community participation. Creating structure allows Aurovilians to understand the participation process and how it works. By sharing the process with the community, capacity will be built and further improve their understanding of the participation process. Due to its importance, structure and transparency were made guiding principles.

Transparency is called for throughout the steps of the framework, including, Setting Intentions, Communicating the Plan, and Report, Feedback and Monitoring. In order to be effective, these steps must be conducted in a transparent manner and allow for easy access to information.

2. Consensus

Consensus is an important principle in Auroville, and is the ideal approach to decision-making. The Community Participation Framework does not directly address how final decisions are made, however, it provides the opportunity for Aurovilians to be better informed which increases the likelihood of reaching consensus. As with transparency, if information is shared freely and openly, people will be more likely to have informed conversations that are not clouded by rumours, increasing the likelihood of reaching consensus. Additionally, defining roles and responsibilities for those involved in the participation process is an important aspect of reaching consensus. If it is understood how and by whom decisions will be made, getting to those decisions becomes more likely.

3. Techniques

Aurovilians expressed a desire for more varied participation techniques. Mixing methods and adapting them to particular circumstances is one of our guiding principles. Included in the



Inside the American Pavilion in Auroville's International Zone

framework is a matrix of participation techniques. While not exhaustive, the list provides numerous techniques which could be used across various types of engagement. Online techniques are also included, which, as indicated by our interviews and surveys, is the preferred method for receiving information about planning and development. Furthermore, the framework itself has the potential to be an online tool. If online, the framework could be filled out, followed, and shared by and amongst project teams.

4. Interest in the Participation Process

Through our survey and interviews, it was found that, despite a large involvement in the participation process, Aurovilians expressed a certain degree of apathy towards current practices. The need to make the process interesting and fun is expressed as a guiding principle of the framework. When people are having fun, they are more likely to be engaged in the process. Additionally, the participation technique matrix provides a wide variety of methods to get the community involved. Creating diverse participation processes can prevent apathy and keep people interested.

5. Reporting Information

Mechanisms for reporting information back to participants for both individual events and the participation process are included in the framework. Interviewees and survey respondents expressed a strong desire to understand how their feedback is heard. The framework also stresses the importance of informing the community at all steps in the process. This is related to the principles of accountability and transparency. The community will feel more invested in the process when they consistently see their input resulting in tangible policy outcomes. Being open about where the process currently is, how input is being used and what the next steps are increases trust. Furthermore, setting intentions and defining roles at the beginning of the process will provide direction for the final outcome.



One of Auroville's many four-legged friends

3.3 Background Research: Community Participation Frameworks

Twelve frameworks with varying jurisdictions were examined in order to understand their structure and components. From the document review, five themes were identified as best practices. These themes complement those found in the survey and interviews and together influenced the development of the Auroville Community Participation Framework.

1. Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are a common characteristic of community participation frameworks. They are found at the beginning of a framework and are used to establish values that are to be seen in the community engagement process regardless of the scope or breadth of participation. These principles should be manageable and reflect the values of the community. The Public Participation Framework of the Municipality of Fort Saskatchewan provides a good example of guiding principles; they are presented in a clear, concise and manageable way.

2. Addressing Local Needs

Participation frameworks that are sensitive to local realities demonstrate a high-level of commitment from decision-makers towards the public participation process. When a framework is tailored to local needs, challenges, and opportunities it is more likely to result in practical and feasible outcomes. Some examples of frameworks that exemplify this theme are:

- The City of Victoria's Civic Engagement Strategy, developed using data collected through participation methods, identifies and addresses six area-specific challenges to public participation.
- The National Policy Framework for Public Participation in South Africa specifically discusses how participation methods can work within the country's political power structure and discusses project implementation within the country's legal context.
- The Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide addresses racial and social inequities in the City of Seattle and how these challenges can manifest and be overcome during the public participation process.

3. The Provision of Tools and Resources

An important attribute of community participation frameworks is the provision of tools and resources. When well presented, these items improve the user friendliness of the document and allow for easy implementation. Examples of resources include: participant identification tools, a project scoping tool, a resource planning tool, public input matrices, a participation technique matrix, planning a public meeting checklist, and evaluation questionnaires. The Public Engagement Guide - Town of Oakville and the Public Participation Guide for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency frameworks provide a diverse set of resources and tools.

Victoria's Framework for
Community Participation

F
FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS: A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE
**Civic Engagement at
The City of Victoria**

The waterfront in Victoria, Canada



4. Broad Step-by-Step Guidelines

Successful community participation frameworks contain a step-by-step guide to the creation, implementation, and evaluation of a community participation plan. These steps must be broad enough to allow the application of the plan in a variety of situations, yet be specific in their outcomes. Like the provision of tools and resources, a framework with a step-by-step guide will improve the ease of implementation. Important steps seen in the evaluated frameworks include but are not limited to: goal setting, identification of participants, and evaluation of the process. Public Engagement Guide - Town of Oakville, Public Participation: Principles and Best Practices for British Columbia and the Public Participation Guide for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency frameworks demonstrate different, but effective approaches to the laying out of the guide in a step-by-step manner.

5. Evaluation and Communication of Results

An effective and adaptable strategy to evaluate the participation plan is perhaps the most important aspect of a participation framework. Lacking, or having an inadequate evaluation scheme, is all too common and can ruin the success of engagement efforts. Equally important is the ability to communicate those results to the public to ensure transparency in the process and to validate the efforts of participants. Evaluation can come in the form of surveys and interviews with both participants and those implementing the plan. It is important to report to the public what decision was made, why the decision was made, how the public input was used, and to thank them for their contribution. The Public Engagement Framework for Strathcona County and the Community Engagement Framework for the Province of Manitoba provide examples of what should be included in public participation evaluation, while the Public Engagement Guide - Town of Oakville contains tools that can be used in the evaluation process.



An example of what a focus group might look like

3.4 Background Research: Community Participation Plans

In the course of our background research, we looked at over 20 case studies relevant to community participation. These included examples from North America, Australia, Europe as well as the developing world and ranged from small local events to cross-boundary policy consultations. The following six cases are those we determined as most relevant to Auroville's situation.

Community Engagement for Melbourne's 10-Year Financial Plan

Description:

In 2014, Melbourne, Australia undertook a community participation process regarding the development of the city's 10-year Financial Plan. The city engaged 600 people over six months through workshops, discussion groups, pop-up events and an online budget simulator. Additionally, a people's panel, comprised of 43 residents that had expressed interest and represented Melbourne's demographics, was selected. This panel met six times and eventually presented 11 recommendations about the city's spending and revenue strategy. These recommendations were presented to city council and several decision-makers made strong verbal commitments to considering and enacting them.

Lessons Learned

- The engagement was adequately scoped and planned.
- The process had a tangible influence on the decision-making process.
- The panel was considered a worthwhile exercise by 96% of participants.
- The input received from the public was in-depth and well-informed.

Relevance to Auroville:

- The people's panel is a form of non-hierarchical community governance, similar to Auroville's.
- The engagement process used online tools that many Aurovilians expressed a preference for.
- The input required a degree of knowledge about local issues which is easier to acquire in an engaged and educated community like Auroville.

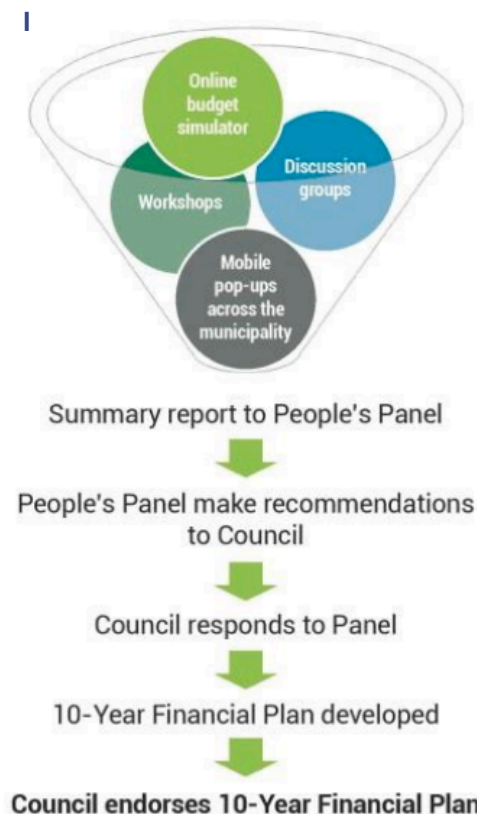


Figure 3.1 Community Engagement Process for Melbourne 10 - Year Financial Plan

Community Participation in Italy's Forest Landscape Management Planning (FLMP)

Description:

The Forest Landscape Management Planning (FLMP) in Italy used a five-stage process for community engagement. This consisted of i) communication and information; ii) stakeholder analysis; iii) questionnaire/survey; iv) synthesis and preparation of planning scenarios and v) consultation of key stakeholders. This represented a more focused form of participation where impacted and affected groups were targeted based on their level of interest, skills and resources.

Lessons Learned:

- Considerable flexibility and adaptability in the process, particularly in regards to different socio economic groups.
- Stakeholders were involved early and there was a constant, two-way flow of information.
- Particular attention was paid to groups that traditionally have a marginal role, yet play a big part in managing land.

Relevance to Auroville:

- Stakeholder-based engagement could be useful in Auroville given the large number of working groups and other organisations.
- Constant exchange of information is key to meeting Aurovilians' high expectations of transparency.

Golden Vision 2030 Plan

The city of Golden, Colorado set out to engage the public during the development of the Golden Vision 2030 Plan, a long-term set of visions and guiding principles. The objective of the process was to strengthen the community by uniting residents over common values, bringing government policy in line with residents' opinions and engaging underrepresented groups, particularly youth. The focus was on visioning which consisted of an extensive number of workshops and focus groups which sought to convert personal anecdotes collected from residents into a set of values and guiding principles. There was then effort to convert these into tangible results and policies. Results were modest, but the participation process directly led to the creation of a number of new community programs.

Lessons Learned:

- A key to engagement was formulating events as social gatherings rather than official meetings.
- The importance of engagement of underrepresented groups with a focus on youth.
- Personal anecdotes were used to develop principles and increase the sense of community.

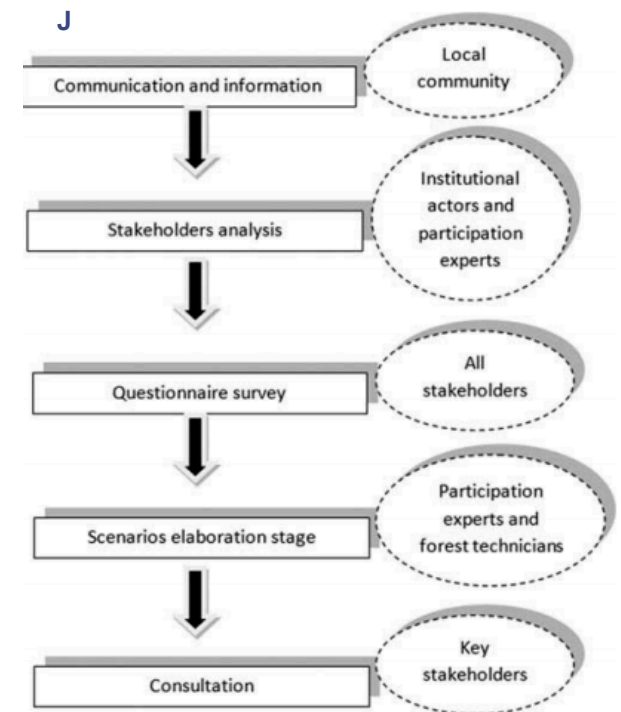


Figure 3.2 Stages of the Public Participation Process in Italian Forest Landscape Management Plans



The main street in Golden, Colorado

Relevance to Auroville:

- Youth are also considered an underrepresented group in Auroville and some lessons can be drawn about how to engage them more effectively.
- Personal anecdotes might be an effective method of collecting data in Auroville due to the strong ties most residents have to the community.
- Auroville is a particularly idealistic and vision-based town, meaning that value-based visioning could be effective.

A Citizens' Panel Approach to Rural Planning (Irish Borderlands)

Description:

The Northern Ireland Cross Border Citizens' Panel was part of a European Union pilot project to involve citizens in rural areas across the continent in local issues. The panel in Ireland covers multiple counties along the border of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The goal was to select fifty citizens at random to convene for four days and decide upon common themes, values and priorities, formulate questions and comments for policy-makers and address fundamental issues facing rural areas on the island of Ireland and the borderlands in particular. At the end of the discussions, a final report was compiled and sent to leaders in Brussels, Dublin and Belfast. There was also a considerable amount of feedback collected from participants throughout.

Lessons Learned:

- The supranational authority of the European Union allowed the panel to ignore national borders and focus on the commonalities of the region.
- Despite the short time frame, panelists were able to become acquainted with each other and there was a noticeably higher standard of trust towards the end.

Relevance to Auroville:

- The ability for panelists to establish rapport with one another may be useful in Auroville where there are sometimes issues of mistrust over the motives of other people.
- Issues related to rural development were discussed during this panel. Given Auroville's low population, level of farming activity and low residential density, some of these methods could be effective.

OurWascana

Description:

OurWascana was a 50 year visioning exercise for Wascana Centre, an urban park and institutional centre, located in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Three questions guided the process: "What do you love about Wascana Centre", "What changes would you like to see in Wascana Centre" and "What are your hopes and dreams for Wascana Centre in the next 50 years?" The process lasted 10 weeks and reached over 3,300 people. It used a wide variety of participatory techniques that ranged from telling to working with the public, and took advantage of many different platforms. Techniques used included a diverse online presence, media releases, bus ads, workshops, feedback stations, photo contests, booths at community events and sounding boards.

Lessons Learned:

- Place-based engagement was used to collect citizen feedback. The use of temporary installations, particularly sounding boards proved effective.
- Several avenues were used to engage citizens, meaning a wide segment of the population was reached.
- Information sharing through both online and traditional platforms was used to develop a strong understanding of the of the project in the community.



An example of the place-based engagement used within the OurWascana visioning exercise

Relevance to Auroville:

- Multiple methods of communication are particularly important in Auroville given its diverse population.
- Place-based engagement could be used in Auroville since much of the town's space is yet to be developed.

Vancouver Coastal Health - Community Engagement Advisory Network (CEAN)

Description:

The Community Engagement Advisory Network (CEAN) is a collaborative framework for public participation related to public health service delivery through Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) in British Columbia, Canada. The CEAN supports VCH's community engagement department and is made up of 95 community members on a volunteer basis who act as intermediaries between the public and VCH and work to identify important community issues. They also engage in health services planning by representing the public on VCH advisory committees, participating in discussions, forums, and focus groups, responding to questionnaires and surveys, reviewing content of patient information materials, and linking staff to community groups.

Lessons Learned:

- CEAN members are demographically representative of the area served by VCH, allowing volunteers to bring a wide range of skills to the table.
- Collaboration between staff and the public in both advisory and operational roles demonstrate a holistic approach to engagement.

Relevance to Auroville:

- The collaboration between staff and the public is relevant to the collaborative model of governance in Auroville.
- The CEAN represents a sophisticated framework of community participation from which lessons for Auroville can be drawn.

Framework Discussion

The preceding six cases demonstrated a wide range of community participation techniques, frameworks and practices. Recurring themes that came up included the need for demographic representation, engagement of underrepresented groups, two-way exchange of information, collaborative decision-making, and value-based participation. We have studied how other cities, towns and rural areas around the world engaged their communities and we incorporated the lessons they learned into our framework. While Auroville's context is unique, there are common themes to be drawn from the experiences that others have had. This understanding will inform our framework and help us determine what will and will not work in Auroville.



Downtown Vancouver, Canada

3.5 Conclusion

The case studies we examined provided a window into how frameworks function in practice. Studying examples of frameworks and actual participation processes gave us a more holistic view of the way community participation frameworks interact with the public and decision-makers. Additionally, the surveys and interviews conducted before and after our arrival in Auroville gave us insight into local processes and the relationship between planning and the community. Best practices identified during the document review and literature review were combined with the feedback we received from Aurovilians through the surveys and interviews to produce a tailored product that better suits the Auroville context. After months of fine-tuning and development, a flexible and intuitive document was created. In total there are seven easy-to-follow steps, each of which can be found in the following chapter.



Covering for bikes in the “Courage” community



Section 4



Framework Implementation

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 What is a Community Participation Framework?

A framework is a text document that guides the development and implementation of a community participation plan. The most comprehensive and user-friendly frameworks are often step-by-step guides that allow anyone to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the specific needs and concerns of their community. There are many challenges on the road to creating successful and meaningful community participation events, and a framework allows for the anticipation and resolution of these challenges.

The value of a framework is its ability to allow decision makers to successfully undertake a community participation process by outlining when participation is appropriate, how much is needed, and to what degree.

4.1.2 The Auroville Community Participation Framework

This framework has been developed to help guide community participation for planning and development in Auroville. The framework, though primarily addressing planning related issues, produces a flexible process that can be applicable for any community issue that requires participation. The framework incorporates the lessons learned from interviews and surveys, a pilot application of the framework to the discussion of community features within social spaces in Auroville, as well as an examination of the scope for applying the framework to all sectors in Auroville.

This framework includes guiding principles and detailed steps to designing a community participation plan. The guiding principles need to be reflected at each step of the process in order to maintain a strong direction to the plan.

4.1.3 How to Use This Framework

The steps outlined in this framework should be applied in the order that they appear for best results, with “Setting Intentions” as the first step and “Providing Feedback” as the last. However, there are situations where steps will be repeated, or not implemented in the exact order as they appear - that is okay! Every participation plan will develop its own path and situations may arise where deviation from the framework may be necessary. Challenging situations and possible solutions will be explained in more detail throughout the following sections.

The framework, as outlined in Chapter 4, can be consulted as a stand alone document. However, it should be noted that, Chapters 1 through 3 provide important supporting information regarding the context and the reasoning behind this framework.

It is our goal that this document will be a useful tool for the Auroville community. By working through the following steps, community participation can become a more comprehensive process that empowers community members and helps collaborative decisions be made.



Afsanah Guesthouse's beautiful grounds

4.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are foundational values that must guide each and every step taken when developing a community participation plan. By doing so, the overall process will strive to achieve success and inclusivity.

The following are principles that should guide all community participation practices in Auroville.

1. Be inclusive
2. Build capacity
3. Be proactive
4. Make it enjoyable
5. Provide structure and be transparent
6. Be accountable
7. Be adaptive

1. Be Inclusive

Successful community engagement is more easily achieved when the community feels included in the process. Since community members are not a homogenous group, efforts must be made on the part of organisers to ensure this happens. It is important to be aware that community members come from different backgrounds and bring different skills and knowledge to the community participation process. Simple considerations might end up having a significant impact. For instance, people may face challenges to participation, such as language barriers. These challenges need to be addressed by the group organising the engagement. In the instance of language barriers, this can be addressed by producing materials in multiple languages. Respect for diversity is a key part of making people feel included and involved in the community participation process. This includes being respectful of the diversity of opinions that exists within the community.

2. Build Capacity

Building capacity among participants involves informing and providing resources to educate the community about the issues at hand.

Misinformed participants can lead to ineffective participation. The participants need to understand the issues at hand and be able to contribute appropriately for them to feel engaged. Having open, detailed, and accessible information leads to constructive discussions and more representative decisions for the community. Proper facilitation during workshops can ensure participants are being heard equally and that they can learn about their peers' interests. Understanding the perspectives of others is important to capacity building as it allows participants to discuss trade-offs and to consider multiple options, leading to better solutions for the community. Using plain language and explaining technical terms is another opportunity for building capacity and will allow people to better participate now and in the future.

3. Be Proactive

Being proactive means having a strategy to attract participants so that decisions are representative of the community. A proactive engagement strategy will seek out community members and encourage their participation rather than relying on individuals taking the initiative themselves. All voices should have a chance to be heard, regardless of differences in ability to commit time and resources. Identifying those that will be affected by or interested in a decision is an important part of the process. Extra effort should also be directed towards attracting excluded or underrepresented groups. Ensuring these groups are included in decision-making will help reduce future conflict and create more community cohesion.

4. Make it Enjoyable

The participation process is not only about informing people but also about keeping them engaged. Strong participatory communities often emerge when participation is enjoyable. In-person events can include food and drink as incentives, for example. Events should begin with issues that are of most interest to the community to engage people early and less contentious discussions should precede more

controversial ones so common ground is established first. Encouraging collaboration promotes trust and positive social interaction.

5. Provide Structure and Be Transparent

Having structure in the participation process helps to ensure that conversation is focused on the issue at hand and progressing towards a decision. Structured and transparent participation processes produce more satisfied participants because they are more inclined to understand the process. It also helps produce timely and efficient decisions. Setting expectations helps keep discussions on-topic and reduces participant misunderstanding and disappointment. All of this must be communicated in a transparent fashion to participants and be founded on honesty, trust, commitment and respect between and among both organisers and participants.

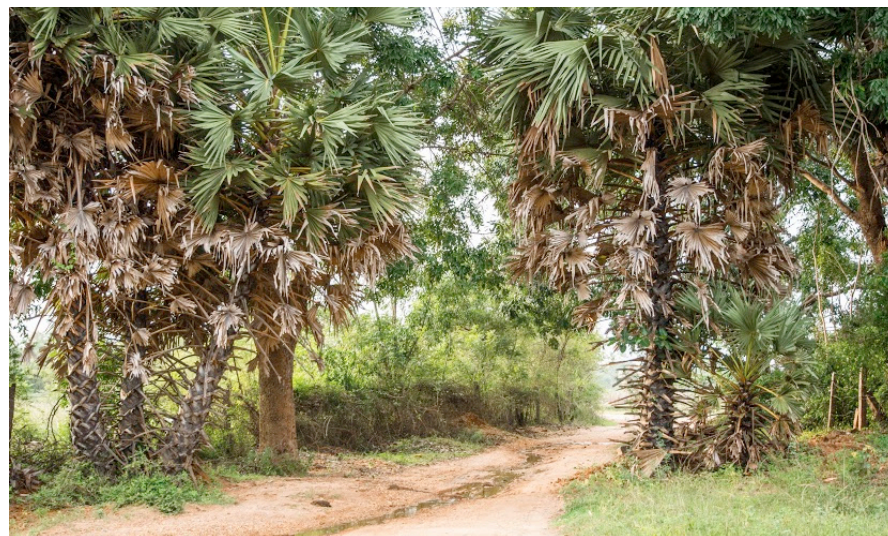
6. Be Accountable

Accountability in participation means that not only are opinions heard, but are followed through on. Aurovilians have a strong tendency towards community participation but it often does not inform the decisions that are made. In order for better decision-making to take place, community participation has to inform decisions. In practice, accountability means communicating to participants how their input was incorporated into the final decision. It also includes seeking feedback from participants about the participation, both during and after the process. To ensure that community participation informs decisions, it must be integrated into the decision-making process itself. This means engaging the community early and having a plan to effectively use their input.

7. Be Adaptive

Being adaptive allows for the development of effective and dynamic participation strategies. On the part of the organisers, it requires self-reflection and monitoring. Using a variety of engagement techniques is one way of being flexible. It not only allows for the combination of the benefits of the various methods, but also to alter techniques throughout the process to more accurately reflect the needs of the community. It is important to not only be able to determine which techniques are appropriate to a particular problem, but also to be flexible enough to

modify the strategy based on arising circumstances.



Palm trees shade in road in Auroville

These seven Guiding Principles need to be reflected at each step of the community participation process to maintain a strong overall direction, while also ensuring a fair and comprehensive plan is enacted. By actively incorporating strong principles into each stage of the plan, facilitators, event organisers, decision makers and participants alike will be part of a larger process that will be working towards representative decision-making. This is not a simple task that can occur merely by considering the Guiding Principles, but instead action must be taken to ensure the Guiding Principle's presence within each and every stage of a plan. To aid in this task, the following section, 4.3, discusses the numerous ways to cultivate and implement effective facilitation skills.

4.3 Developing Facilitation Skills

4.3.1 What is Facilitation?

Facilitation is a method for working with people. It can be used during any discussion or debate, but is particularly useful in situations where conflict may arise. When done correctly, facilitation not only enables a smooth and easy process, but also empowers people to carry out tasks more whole-heartedly. In community participation, facilitation is the management of participants. Depending on the layout of the event, the number of participants and the technique being used, more than one facilitator may be required. Be mindful of your own resources when organising an event and plan accordingly.

Facilitator(s) guide the dialogue and attempt to maximise participants' time and energy by keeping the event and discussions on topic and on time. This is not a simple task and it is important that those who wish to lead be equipped with the proper skills. A key goal to keep in mind as a facilitator is that it is your job to encourage people to share ideas, resources and opinions to allow for unique and valuable contributions from each and every member. By mediating the group process, the facilitator ensures that a community taps deeply into its knowledge.

4.3.2 Why do You Need Facilitation?

If you want an event to be fruitful, keep community participants involved and create real leadership opportunities within the community. A facilitator is the face of a community participation event and the main point of contact between participants and organisers. They also bridge the gap between task and process. Without their expertise in creating and guiding active participation, the process could break down. Without a prepared facilitator, conversations could hit roadblocks, participants might not contribute and extraneous and irrelevant topics could derail discussion.

There needs to be a general understanding that an equal emphasis will be placed on reaching engagement goals and on achieving an effective process.

4.3.3 Facilitation Styles

There is no singular style to facilitation and often a single event can require different styles at different moments. Each of the following styles has their own strengths and weaknesses and can encourage different behaviour from participants. A good facilitator needs to know how and when to use each of the following styles effectively.



Stairway outside the Solar Kitchen

1. Directive

Providing information and instructing participants on what they need to do. This type of method is more hands off than others and is about providing information and letting the participants work through the activities.

2. Exploratory

The facilitator is more involved in the discussion aspect of an event in this situation. Here it is common for the facilitator to ask questions of the group, encouraging people to voice their experiences and ideas.

3. Delegating

Assigning tasks, roles and function to individuals, for example asking a participant to become a note taker as well. This method can offer ownership of the outcome to the individuals, as they become leaders of the process.

4. Participative

The facilitator is fully immersed in the activity instead of taking a back seat role. Instead of leading the conversation, they become part of the conversation, sharing personal experiences and encouraging others to do likewise.

4.3.4 What are the Facilitator's Responsibilities?

A facilitator's main objective is to ensure that a community participation event runs smoothly and leads to a productive and meaningful process. To achieve this outcome, there is a combination of basic and forward-thinking steps that must be taken prior to an event.

4.3.5 Steps to Being a Good Facilitator

1. Create a Safe Space

A facilitator needs to set the tone. A welcoming environment must be established early to encourage people to share their experiences and ideas and urge those with relevant background information to share. Be mindful that atmosphere greatly affects the mood of individuals. When

people feel they are being respected and heard they are far more willing to open up and leave their personal agenda at the door.

2. Come Prepared

It is imperative that a facilitator is fully educated about the topic surrounding the event. Without an in-depth understanding of the issues it will be very difficult for a facilitator to anticipate potential challenges and overcome those that arise. Good facilitators make the process look effortless and natural, which can only come with confidence and readiness. A good rule of thumb is to consider the “who, what, why and where” and understand the “how.”

Being prepared is more than a state of mind; it is a physical process as well. It is a good idea to create a checklist of all the possible materials that will be needed by both participants and the facilitator.

3. Communicate the Objective of the Event

When participants are properly informed, their contribution during an event will be far more useful. It is the facilitator's job to ensure that individuals or groups fully understand the chain of events during a workshop, but also what the end goal is.

4. Establish Ground Rules

Ground rules are needed to organise an event, especially when there are many participants. Although ground rules might seem rigid, they should allow for a great deal of flexibility. Some general rules you may want to include, depending on the engagement technique used are:

- *Take Turns Talking* – People should not be speaking over each other and when participants are forced to wait for “their turn” it encourages them to think about what they have to say and its importance.
- *Law of Two Feet* – When a participant no longer feels that they are learning or contributing to the conversation they should feel free to “use their own two feet” and join another discussion.
- *Be Respectful* – The facilitator must acknowledge and respect each individual and prevent others from undermining or commandeering a conversation. This level of respect must be expected of all participants, regardless of their level of expertise or lack thereof.

- *Remain on Topic* – Participants need to be encouraged to remain on topic, allowing discussions to have a focus and purpose. Solutions cannot be generated when participants begin tangential conversations. Although unrelated topics should be discouraged, it is important to acknowledge that participants have been heard and that their concerns, although not relevant to the current conversation, have been noted.

5. Be Flexible

Although ground rules are important, it is equally important to be flexible. Room for organic conversations to occur is imperative, as important issues or solutions may arise from meaningful conversations that were not planned. Strive to balance people's right to contribute and the need to stay on topic – a balancing act that requires finesse and sensitivity.

6. Provide Closure

When a consensus has been reached, a facilitator should recognise this. A good way to communicate to a group that they are in agreement is by asking a participant to summarise the points of agreement to the group, allow for additional input or clarification and then move forward.

7. Summarise the Meeting Results and Needed Follow-Ups

Debriefing participants throughout the process and at the end of an event will ensure that everyone stays informed. Highlighting everything that happened also reminds participants how helpful their input was to the overall community participation process and commends them for their hard work. Refer back to the objectives or outcomes that were set at the beginning of the event to show just how much was accomplished. At this stage, also remind participants how their input will be used moving forward. Keep the process as transparent as possible and summarise the follow-up actions.

8. Be Thankful

Participation is a timely process and the time participants' dedicated should be recognised. Take a minute to thank all those who were part of the process for their helpful and meaningful input.

This is not an exhaustive list of all the possible steps and should be adapted to the local context and the strengths and weaknesses of the facilitator. However, it does provide a solid foundation for good facilitation.

4.3.6 Dealing with Disrupters: Prevention and Intervention Techniques

Difficult behaviour is often unintentional or occurs as the result of an emotionally charged situation. To ensure a productive and encouraging process for all participants, disruptions should be discouraged and stopped. It is important to not allow disrupters to dominate the event, as it could make others feel uncomfortable and unwilling to share undermining the entire process. Luckily there are some simple, but effective methods to prevent disruptions and intervene when they occur.

- *Restate the Ground Rules* - When hitting roadblocks its important to reinforce the pre-agreed upon arrangements.
- *Ask Clarification Questions* - Try and understand their point of view and/or reasoning, understanding can lead to a resolution much quicker than confrontation.
- *Seek Help From the Group* - Ask how the others feel regarding the disrupting member's attitude.
- *Address the Issue* – Either in a private one-on-one session at a break or during an activity, be honest about what is going on and how the participant's attitude is negatively affecting the group.
- *Use Humour* - Try using humour to lighten the mood and decrease tension.
- *Accept or Legitimise the Point* – Show that you understand their issue by making it clear that you hear how important it is to them and legitimise their concern. Make a bargain to deal with their issue for a short period of time and if that does not work, agree to defer the issue to the end of the meeting, or even set-up a committee to explore it further.

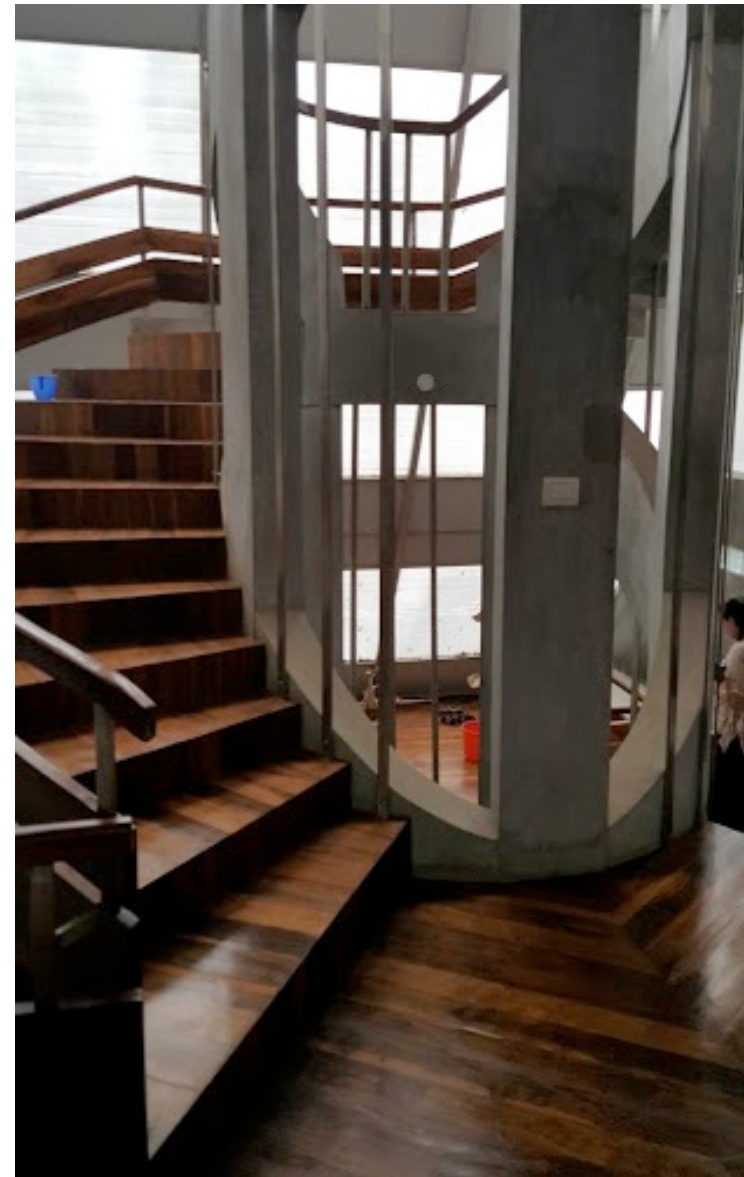
- *Take a Break* – Sometimes walking away from an issue for a short period of time is a great way to calm down, rethink a position or gather your thoughts.
- *Ask the Disrupter to Leave* – This should only be used as an absolute last resort. It may be the best option for the integrity of the event and to ensure a respectful process to, either directly or indirectly, ask a disrupter to leave an event.

4.3.7 Limitations of Facilitation

Facilitation is not an easy process and regardless of the level of skill and preparedness that a facilitator brings to an event, any participatory event has its own innate limitations and challenges. There are so many variables in a community participation event that it is impossible to foresee all the possible challenges that may occur.

Be prepared to realise that despite your best efforts, sometimes an event can fail. The best thing to do in these situations is learn from your mistakes and adapt the next event to better address the challenges that a community presents. Just because something may be hard does not mean it is not worth doing. The hope is that community participation will become easier with practice and as the community's capacity is built.

Facilitation is a method of working that is used to create agreed upon goals, plans and actions for the betterment of a society. This process highly depends on the values and visions of the participants who contribute to the process. It is important to remember that it is the values, principles and beliefs of the community members and the facilitator that can channel the outcomes to positive social change, and not the facilitation by itself. Good facilitation is only part of the process, but an important part none the less. Each stage of the community participation framework requires facilitation in one form or another (especially step 5) and thus it is imperative to consistently be considering and incorporating tips and tricks. The framework's success is completely dependent on the quality of the participation, which in turn can largely be shaped by the use of effective facilitation techniques.



The architecture of Auroville's Town Hall

4.4 Auroville Community Participation Framework

4.4.1 Step 1: Setting Intentions

The following toolkit was developed to guide those wishing to create and implement a community participation plan. Each of the seven steps are explained in detail, highlighting why they are imperative to the overall process and how to carry out the needed requirements for each. The hope is that this toolkit will provide direction for the implementation of successful community participation.



Figure 4.1 Steps in the Community Participation Plan

Participation Intentions:

In order to develop an appropriate and effective approach to community participation, it is essential to set intentions at the onset of any planning and development project. Intention setting is the process of reflecting on the purpose of community participation and its desired outcomes. Outcomes can range from tangible results to more subtle products, such as a sense of satisfaction amongst participants.

Intentions should be clearly defined and manageable in order for them to be understood and achieved. Communicating intentions will increase transparency and accountability in the procedure by ensuring that the broader community has an understanding why community participation is being sought. Clear intentions guide subsequent steps of the process and lead the project towards more usable community input.

To set intentions, the project team must ask themselves why they want to engage with the community and what information they are hoping to receive. Additional questions may be answered, but the following must be answered as the first stage in creating a community participation plan. These answers will clarify the direction and objectives of the overall process:

- What are you hoping to achieve from the participation process?
- What outcome would be considered successful?
- What type of information should be collected from the participants?

The following are examples of possible answers to these questions, and can help set intentions when considering how to create a community participation plan for a specific project or development:

- Identifying community priorities with respect to land-use decisions
- Building partnerships between community members and planners
- Gathering opinions to establish points of agreement or disagreement

- Developing solutions to challenges based on the responses of community members
- Achieving consensus among community members regarding a given issue

Defining Roles:

The second aspect of intention-setting is defining roles and responsibilities for all those who will be involved in the participation process. This includes the decision-maker, the project team, and the participants. This is a crucial step in developing a participation plan as it clarifies roles and responsibilities and improves accountability on part of the decision makers and project team.

It is equally important that the role of the participants be identified. This helps the community understand how they can be involved and how their involvement will be included in the final decision. If certain roles, most importantly the decision maker, are not identified/known the public needs to be informed to ensure transparency is maintained. Promises that cannot be kept should never be made to the public and a large part of that is identifying how influential the public input will be.

Questions that should be asked to define roles of those involved in the process include, but are not limited to:

- Who is the decision maker?
- How will the final decision be made?
- How will the community be informed of the decision?
- Does the project team have a role as a decision maker?
- Who is conducting the participation events?
- What are the responsibilities of the community during the participation process?

These two steps within the intention-setting stage will frame the participation process by creating clear outcomes of participation and well-defined roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the process. Once intentions have been established, an examination of the potential strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities facing a community regarding a particular project can be determined.

4.4.2 Step 2: SWOC Analysis

A SWOC analysis focuses on the identification of a community's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges. It is a strategic planning method used to identify and categorise internal and external factors faced in a particular project, plan or organization. The identification of strengths and weaknesses refers specifically to internal components, such as the plan itself, the team and the implementation process. Opportunities and challenges on the other hand refer to external components of the process, in particular the participants, the outcomes of the process and community factors.

A SWOC analysis helps provide an up-to-date picture of a local environment or situation, and can help determine the viability and direction needed for a specific proposal, event or development. A SWOC matrix should be completed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges using a collaborative approach at the beginning of the planning process. When the matrix is completed, it can serve as a reference for the remainder of the project. It will reinforce what you have been doing well in the past and what opportunities exist to better your approach. Further, it allows for constructive reflection regarding what has been previously attempted that has not worked, and foresees any challenges or threats that exist for the specific activity.

With regard to community participation in Auroville, the SWOC analysis can be used to identify methods which have been used in the past that have been successful, as well as methods which did not work in certain situations. It also allows for the identification of individuals and groups who could potentially oppose the project being proposed. This information will be extremely valuable for identifying individuals you should communicate with more during the participatory process, as those identified will likely be the most affected by the proposed development or plan. Additionally, identifying opportunities that exist within certain circumstances allows for the implementation of alternative or new participatory methods.

The matrix seen in Table 4.2 is an example of some of the questions that should be considered when conducting a SWOC analysis. Feel free to add additional questions to any of the sections that may better address your specific plan or activity.

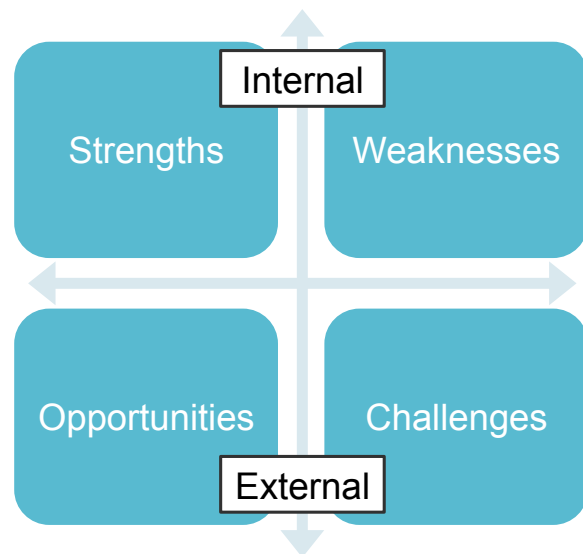


Table 4.1: SWOC Matrix

4.4.3 Step 3: Identifying Impacted and Interested Groups

After the project team identifies what they would like to achieve and the potential roadblocks or benefits that may occur throughout, they need to identify those individuals within the community that may be more interested or impacted by the development. This step should also be conducted early in the development of a community participation strategy to allow for the appropriate outreach to occur. A thorough analysis of impacted and interested parties ensures that participation events reflect the Guiding Principles of this framework, especially as it innately encourages inclusivity.

It will be hard to define what an impacted group is, as it can be anyone who's daily life may be altered due to a project or development. To counteract these limitations, interested groups are also considered. If done thoughtfully, this analysis step will improve the overall efficiency and transparency of the decision making process, build capacity within the community by ensuring proper knowledge is being circulated, ensure an inclusive process and reduce long-term project costs by increasing the likelihood of community agreement.

The purpose of the analysis is to identify which people should be proactively sought out and recruited, as mentioned in the principles. However, despite organisers best efforts, there will always be groups who may have been overlooked. Groups may self-identify throughout the process as either impacted or interested, or discussions with originally identified groups may lead to the discovery of other groups. Regardless of how they are identified, these new people need to be incorporated into the plan. An analysis of interested and/or impacted groups is a dynamic tool and the results should evolve as new information is discovered. Identifying other groups, or clarifying the extent of a project's impact, will likely occur at multiple stages of the participation process, so it is important to remain flexible and open-minded throughout a community participation plan.

When conducting an analysis of impacted and interested groups there are several factors one must consider. Understanding how each party will be impacted, to what extent they will be impacted, their geographical proximity to the project, their history of involvement in previous participation exercises, the degree of influence they have over the process, and the amount and type of resources they have to devote to the process will allow the project team to develop a participation plan that meets the needs of the community. These factors will vary from group to group, influencing how to direct participation towards different groups at different times.

Conducting Analysis of Impacted and Interested Groups and Individuals:

Brainstorm all groups who may have an interest in the project, regardless of how strong that interest may be. Remember to be as exhaustive as possible, include formal organisations, working groups, informal groups and individuals in order to ensure inclusivity. List them in a table, an example of which can be seen in Table 4.3.

Once groups and individuals are identified, fill out the remaining columns. While completing the chart remember to include how the potential final decision impacts these groups and individuals, their geographical relationship to the project (if applicable), their expected level of interest in the project, their needs or accessibility concerns, and any resources or skills the groups possess. If there is a long list of Individuals on the spreadsheet, assemble ones with similar characteristics into a single

group if possible, as this will improve efficiency in the participation process. By completing a chart like this, it requires a project team to consider how a particular project or proposal impacts various groups within the community.

Important Considerations When Identifying Groups:

Identified parties may not necessarily be involved in the participation process to the same degree. Groups should never be engaged for engagement's sake. This could lead to an unfocused, tokenistic participation strategy that could prevent the project team from reaching their objectives and eroding trust with the community in the long-term. Considerable thought should be given to who should be included and how they should be included.

Geographical proximity to the project is a key consideration when identifying how groups and individuals should be engaged during the participation process. While a proposed project may draw interest from Aurovilians throughout the Township, it is not required that everyone be engaged at the same level. Those in the immediate vicinity of the project may be impacted to a greater degree and should therefore be engaged at a higher participation level.

Overall, value-laden analysis must be avoided. Groups could perceive this action as an undermining of the significance of their interests. The purpose of determining impacted and/or interested groups is to scope the issues surrounding the project.

	Group or individual	How are they impacted?	Geographical proximity to the project	Expected level of interest in the project? (None, Low, Medium, High)	Needs & accessibility concerns	Resources & skills
1.						
2.						
3.						

Figure 4.3: Brainstorming Chart

The information produced in Step 3 will help determine which type of participation will best satisfy the issues, interests, and needs of the group. The analysis of groups and individuals will provide the basis for choosing which type of participation and participation methods are appropriate for reaching the identified groups.

4.4.4 Step 4: Choose Types of Engagement

Choosing the type of engagement required in the community is a crucial step. The type of engagement you choose will guide your interactions with the community and how, and to what degree, their ideas will be incorporated into the decision making process.

There are four community engagement types that you can choose from. These types are: 1) Tell, 2) Listen, 3) Discuss, and 4) Work Together, as seen in Figure 4.4. This graphic shows that there is a gradient of community power within the decision making process. The first type, 'Tell' has the least community power, whereas 'Work Together' has the most.

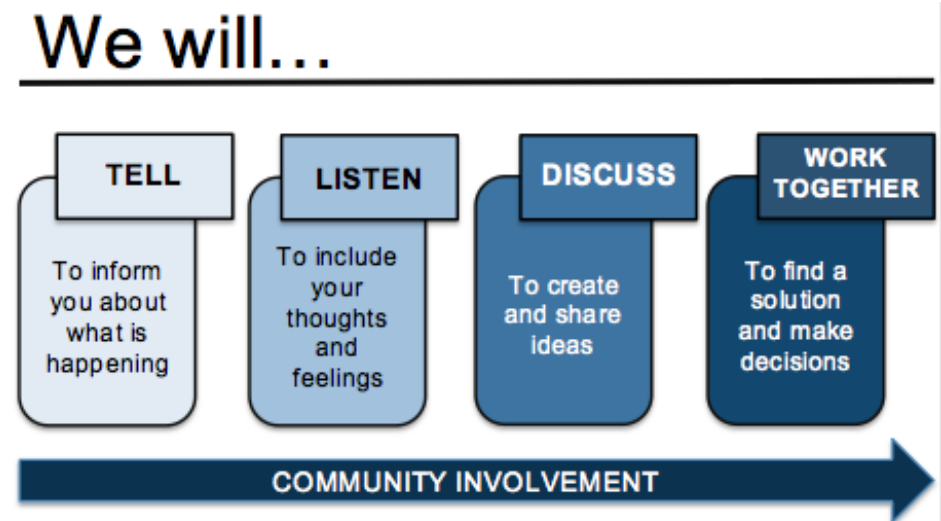


Figure 4.4: The Types of Community Participation

It is important to note that your community participation process may use more than one type throughout the life of your project, as can be seen by Figure 4.5. For example, when you first begin your project you may wish to 'Tell' the community to let them know about an upcoming project. For instance, you might distribute e-mails to inform the community about an upcoming development. Next, you may wish to 'Discuss' to create and share ideas about the development. To do this you may hold a workshop. After this, you may want to 'Tell' the community to inform them of your findings.

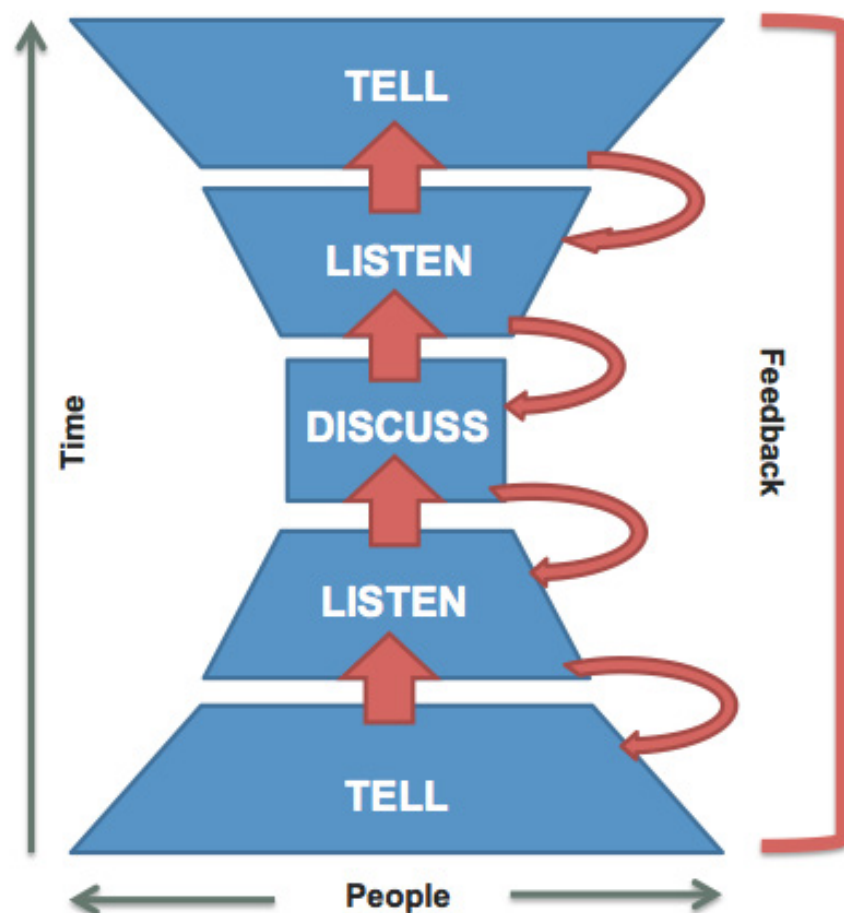


Figure 4.5 shows the life of a project and the various types of engagement used. This graphic shows that more than one type may be used throughout the process.

The type of engagement used also reflects whether a development project is controversial or not. For example, if a project is small and will not cause an impact on a community, 'Listening' to the community may be sufficient. On the other hand, if a project is very contentious you should consider choosing types that are more interactive such as 'Discuss' or 'Work Together'. If you initially believe that a project will have very little impact, but it is later revealed that this is not true, you should adjust your chosen engagement type accordingly.

Different types of engagement are associated with different participation techniques. Choosing the type of engagement guides which techniques are chosen, as each technique provides different forms of interaction and outcomes. For example, if you want to 'Tell' a community you may send them e-mail, post a notice online or hand out flyers. To see a complete list of techniques and their associated type see Step 5 and Appendix C.

4.4.5 Step 5: Choose Techniques

Choosing techniques is the step where you select the actual methods through which you will be engaging with the public. Once you have set your intentions, completed the SWOC analysis and identified interested and impacted groups you can utilise this information, in combination with the identified type of engagement, to select the appropriate technique(s) to carry out the community participation plan.

Techniques do not need to be used in isolation. Often an effective community participation plan requires a combination of multiple techniques employed at varying stages of the process in order to be successful and effective. It is intended that all methods be selected for the entire project during the development of the plan, but as you work through your consultation you may identify that additional techniques are required in order to achieve your intentions. During the selection process, regardless of the number of techniques chosen, it is imperative that your Guiding Principles are constantly represented.

When selecting individual techniques you must think about what information you would like to gain from that particular method, and how it will contribute to the overall goals and intentions of the community participation process. The "Output Type" column of Table 4.3 identifies the information and results that can be obtained from each technique,

which will assist in determining which technique(s) are required to meet the pre-determined intentions.

How to Select Techniques:

Step One:

When selecting techniques you should go through all techniques available and create a comprehensive list of techniques that would assist in achieving your desired outcome. This list can be seen in Table 4.3. Some considerations that must be considered when selecting these techniques are:

- What is the level of the community impact? What output do you require?
- Who should be involved? Does the project concern the entire community or a select group of individuals? Should there be specific techniques for select groups?
- What is the issue? How will the decision be made? Does the technique utilised need to be used to assist in making this decision?
- What does the community need to do?

Step Two:

Refine the list of possible techniques by using your SWOC analysis and list of identified and interested groups. The following is a list of considerations which should be available from the previous steps:

- What are the requirements and capacity of the group(s) involved? Will they be able to fully engage in the selected technique?
- Where will meetings be held? What are your space limitations?
- What resources and capacity does the technique require and do you have those readily available?
- What materials do you have, or will you be able to obtain? Can you supply everything required for that technique?
- Where and how will information be available?

Step Three:

Review your selected techniques for accessibility considerations to ensure that all identified individuals will be able to participate fully. A

comprehensive list of accessibility considerations is provided below, however, the specific needs of a community may vary depending on the population demographics. Each chosen participation technique should be reviewed using this list of accessibility considerations to ensure each event meets the criteria as set-out in the Guiding Principles.

Step Four:

Ensure that the technique(s) are representative of your larger objective, work towards your intentions and accurately incorporate the required number of participants. This involves the review of your intentions, as well as integration of the data produced by each technique into the following events, to ensure that the techniques selected achieve the objective of the engagement. This step can also help ensure that all group(s) are reached by forcing organisers to rethink their strategy thus far.

Accessibility Considerations:

When organising community participation events, be conscientious of the possible accessibility barriers that exist within your community. Think about your community and their needs. How can you ensure that, regardless of the activity, everyone is able to fully participate? All community members should have the opportunity to influence the decision-making process and have their voice heard. By providing solutions to accessibility barriers, that opportunity is being granted to them.

The following five factors are a good starting place to ensure each technique, and the entire plan is accessible.

i. Sense of Belonging

Always make people feel welcome! When a welcoming environment is created and upheld, people are more likely to actively engage in activities and be empowered to make a change in their community. Having a friendly greeter who welcomes everyone will help ensure that they are comfortable entering the event, and can create a sense of belonging. Consider having food and drinks that people can have during the event to make sure no one is uncomfortably hungry or thirsty, and ensure that washrooms should be well marked so that nobody has to feel uncomfortable asking where these facilities are.

ii. Venue

When choosing a venue, always ensure that the building itself and the room being used are physically accessible to all members of the community. A simple ways to ensure that your venue is accessible is by choosing a venue that provides the necessary amenities for those with disabilities, such as pathways and ramps at entrances, wheelchair accessible washrooms, etc. As well, not everyone has the same level of mobility. If there is a lot of walking or standing in your technique, consider when breaks will occur and how people can take rests throughout.

Also, consider the significance of the space you use, as certain locations tend to hold different meanings. Try to choose a neutral location for extremely contentious issues, or consider holding the meeting near to the project you are discussing.

Lastly, consider where your venue is located within your community. If there are high travel costs to and from your venue it may deter participants from attending your event.

iii. Document Production

When producing documents for distribution to the community two overarching considerations need to be made:

- The language of the text and,
- The format of the text.

Ask yourself: Should the document be distributed in a variety of languages? Consider the languages that are common to the community, and determine if it is feasible to have documents in a variety of languages. This will allow individuals of different first languages to participate more fully and will add to the quality of the outcomes. Consider also, what words could confuse people? Do specific terms have a loaded meaning that may disrupt the outcome you are trying to achieve? Lastly, remember that not everyone has the same understanding or familiarity with a particular project or event. Technical jargon or complicated concepts should be kept out of documents for distribution, and instead text should be simple and clear.

Regarding format of the text consider how the text, terminology, font style, size, colour and possible graphics will resonate with different community members. What is an accessible text size and font? Consider

that not everyone sees colour in the same way and avoid using colour combinations common in colour blindness.

iv. Childcare

Consider providing childcare during your events, especially if the event is a longer process or if held at night. Some community members may be very interested in your event and could benefit the outcome greatly, but they are unable to attend due to family obligations. This also provides an additional participation opportunity by allowing children to participate in the planning process and be involved in their community.

v. Timing

The time at which consultation events are held is an important factor to consider when planning an event. Schedule events at a time that is convenient and allows a high attendance. As well, do not feel restricted to hosting an event only once. Events can be held during several different times (ex. morning, noon, evening and weekends) or even on multiple days. Work with your community to find a time that will bolster your event and draw as many participants as possible. If you are targeting techniques to specific groups think about what time will work best for that group.

Working with the Techniques

After you have worked through the above four steps, a complete list of techniques should be compiled to implement the community engagement plan. Document these techniques and begin to compile the materials needed so that you are prepared when it comes time to employ these techniques. Be sure to ask individuals early for their assistance and be prepared that they may say no, so be sure to have a back-up plan!

Table 4.3 in Appendix C includes a list of community participation techniques. Although not exhaustive, the table includes a multitude of ways that you may engage the public. The list has been tailored to include options appropriate to the Auroville context.

4.4.6 Step 6: Communicate and Implement the Plan

Once all of the implementation decisions have been made, the community needs to be notified of the plan. Properly communicating the participation process is extremely important, especially for ensuring that all interested parties are notified. Here you are also setting the stage for transparency in the process. Often participation events will occur over several months or even years, and may consist of several stages. Clearly explaining how all of the stages of the participation will work together, and how and when individuals may participate makes understanding the entire process easier for all community members. If a project is expected to have a long or extensive participation process, a launch event can be helpful for creating excitement and momentum. Launch events can be big or small (such as a tea or coffee event or meet and greet) and are just to inform Auroville about the upcoming events and how they may find further information. Launch events are not meant for collecting feedback, but instead are to bring the community together and get participants excited about the coming events.

At this stage intentions for the process should be communicated to the community. Good communication will help to set community expectations for how they can participate, as well as how their participation will influence the final outcomes. Informing the community of the entire process early on allows for individuals to feel like they have been properly contacted and included in the process.

Communication should be upbeat and pleasant, utilizing attractive and inspiring visuals when possible. Additionally, various methods of communication should be selected to ensure that a wide audience receives information about the participation process. Specific methods of communication can also be selected to reach target audiences. For instance, mailing out newsletters to a neighbourhood that will be directly impacted by a planning decision can be important. A good tip is to create a mailing list of individuals who are interested in the participation process for quick updates to those individuals about how the process is progressing. Conversely, if there are delays in the engagement process it is important to properly notify interested Aurovilians. This ensures that the participation process is proactive by keeping interested individuals informed at all stages.

After all of the participation processes and components have been decided, it is time to implement the plan. This involves performing all of the tasks that have been agreed upon in earlier steps and adapting the process when necessary. For instance, if a significant issue is identified in one of the participation methods, it may be necessary to create additional events to discuss the issues and reach consensus. If the process deviates from the initial plan, it is important to notify all interested parties to ensure a clear and transparent participation process. Collaboration and working together is imperative to ensure that all aspects of the community participation process are synchronised together.

It is imperative that the engagement process be continually evaluated to ensure that it is performing in a way that is acceptable to both those implementing the process and the members of the community involved in it. No process will be acceptable to every member of a community, but steps must be taken to ensure that the public opinion regarding it is generally positive.

4.4.7 Step 7: Evaluate and Monitor the Community Engagement Process

The final step in this framework outlines how to gather, analyse and distribute feedback from each participation event and the entire plan. This will allow those with the responsibility for implementing the framework to continue to refine it and ensure the continued success of the engagement process. Initial interviews and surveys undertaken with Aurovilians indicated that transparency is a key feature that must be integrated into any community participation process developed for Auroville. Monitoring, reporting and providing feedback on the process thus becomes an extremely important feature in ensuring that the process is as successful as possible. Despite the importance of feedback, this stage can often be the most neglected, as it can be considered a very resource intensive exercise. However, this step provides some key considerations and resources to minimise the effort required to implement meaningful and effective monitoring and feedback reporting.

The monitoring, reporting and feedback can be divided into two categories; the evaluation of individual events and the evaluation of the entire framework.

Evaluating Individual Events:

At each event there must be a facilitator responsible for collecting feedback that must be publically distributed to the community. The method of collecting feedback is subject to the type of participation technique, as there is no standardised method that can be applicable to all events. When developing the feedback mechanisms think about how the event was organised, what information was being gained and how that information was gathered.

At the end of an event, both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected to evaluate the participation process. Additionally, this can identify issues with the technique used or additional issues that will require more consultation and participation events.

The quantitative data collected at each community participation event should include:

- Event name and technique used; also a good idea to record the directions given to participants
- Number of attendees. Have a sign-in sheet provided at events where contact details for participants can be recorded. This will allow for easy follow-up information to be distributed and to set-up online feedback mechanisms.
- Online traffic statistics (e.g., number of visits, frequency, duration)
- Number of written complaints and/or comments received

The qualitative data collected at each community participation event should include:

- General attitudes at the event (i.e. positive, negative, indifferent)
- Quality of dialogue generated (e.g. letters, comments, discussion on project website and external discussions)
- General themes that emerged from the discussion at the event

It is also important to know how the people involved in the event feel about that particular form of participation technique, especially in cases where an event has not been previously conducted. Feedback is

one of the best means of gauging the success of an event, for example, if an event was ineffective or poorly received by the community, this specific technique must be adjusted before it is utilised again. Some ways to gauge the success of an individual event is by distributing short exit surveys or questionnaires that gauge the overall effectiveness of that event in the eyes of the participants. An example is provided in Appendix E.

It is important to remember that feedback should be collected from each and every participation technique. When collecting all this data continuity should be considered, an example of the standardised feedback template is provided as Appendix E. When similar styles of feedback are collected, or at least similar qualitative and quantitative information, comparisons within and between events become a lot simpler. Standardisation will also help the implementation of this step, as it can assist facilitators by making collecting feedback less time intensive, as well as establishing feedback reporting as an expectation.

Evaluation of the Overall Process:

Research in the field of community participation provides a few clues on how this framework can be properly evaluated. The criteria required is divided into two categories

- Acceptance criteria - concerns features of a method that make it acceptable to the wider public; and
- Process criteria – concerns features of the process that are liable to ensure that it takes place in an effective manner.

Acceptance Criteria	Process Criteria
• Representativeness of participants	• Resource accessibility
• Independence of true participants	• Task definition
• Early involvement?	• Structured decision making
• Influence on final policy	• Cost-effectiveness
• Transparency of process to the community	

Figure 4.6 Acceptance and Process Criteria

Engagement organisers should poll the entire community to discover how they felt about the participation process. The results from this survey must be tabulated and general themes of concern must be identified, providing input on what has and has not been successful to date with respect to the implementation of this framework. In order to ensure the continued success of community participation, identified areas of concern should be evaluated to discover how the community participation framework might be refined in order to continue to best meet the needs of the facilitators and community as a whole.

Reporting:

Finally, all data received from participants needs to be synthesised, by either the facilitators or the project team, and distributed in a report form to the entire community (possibly via Auroville Intranet). Summary reports should be distributed after each participation event, as well as when a project comes to completion. This will ensure that the feedback loop is constantly ongoing and that the process remains truly transparent. It is especially important to note in summary publications what the outcome(s) of each meeting were and what will be done with the results (i.e. next steps).

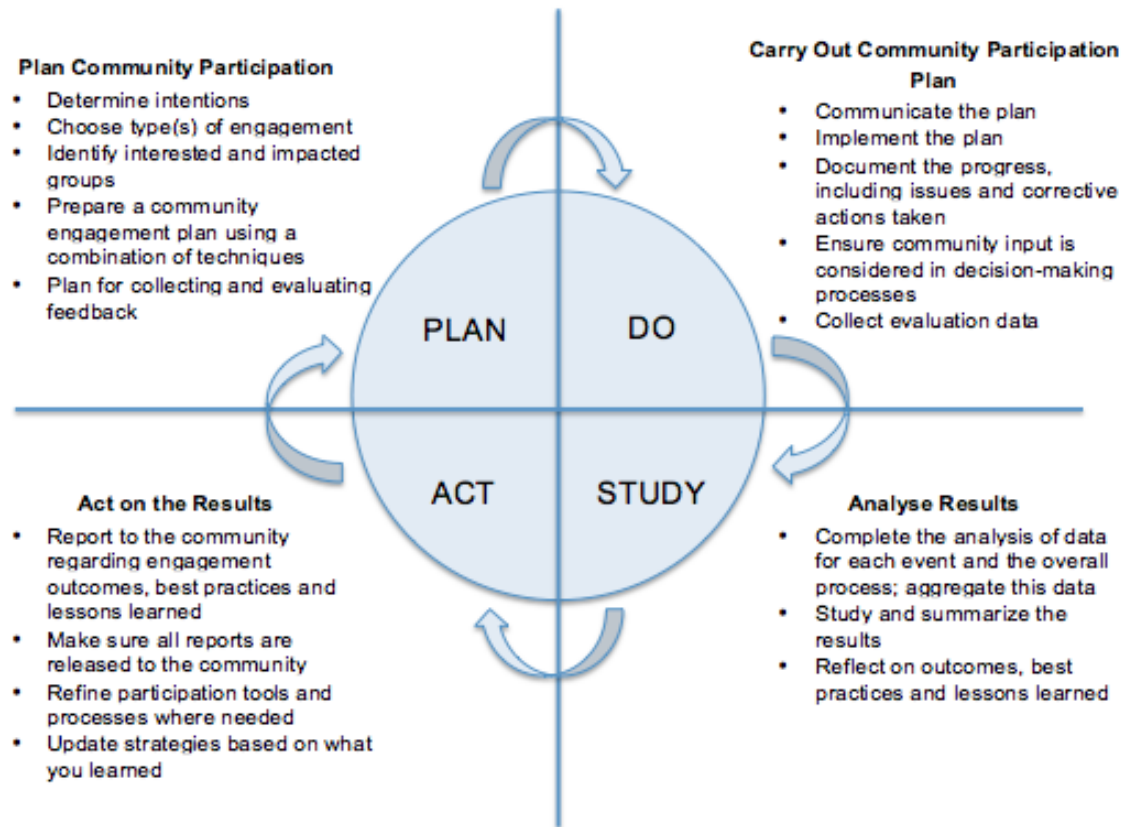
A participation process can be exceptionally well developed, but if there is no follow-up with the community regarding the use of their participation and how it will affect the decision making process, the entire community participation process is likely to fail. Without informing the public via feedback and reports, the entire participation process will become tokenistic and will disenfranchise the community.

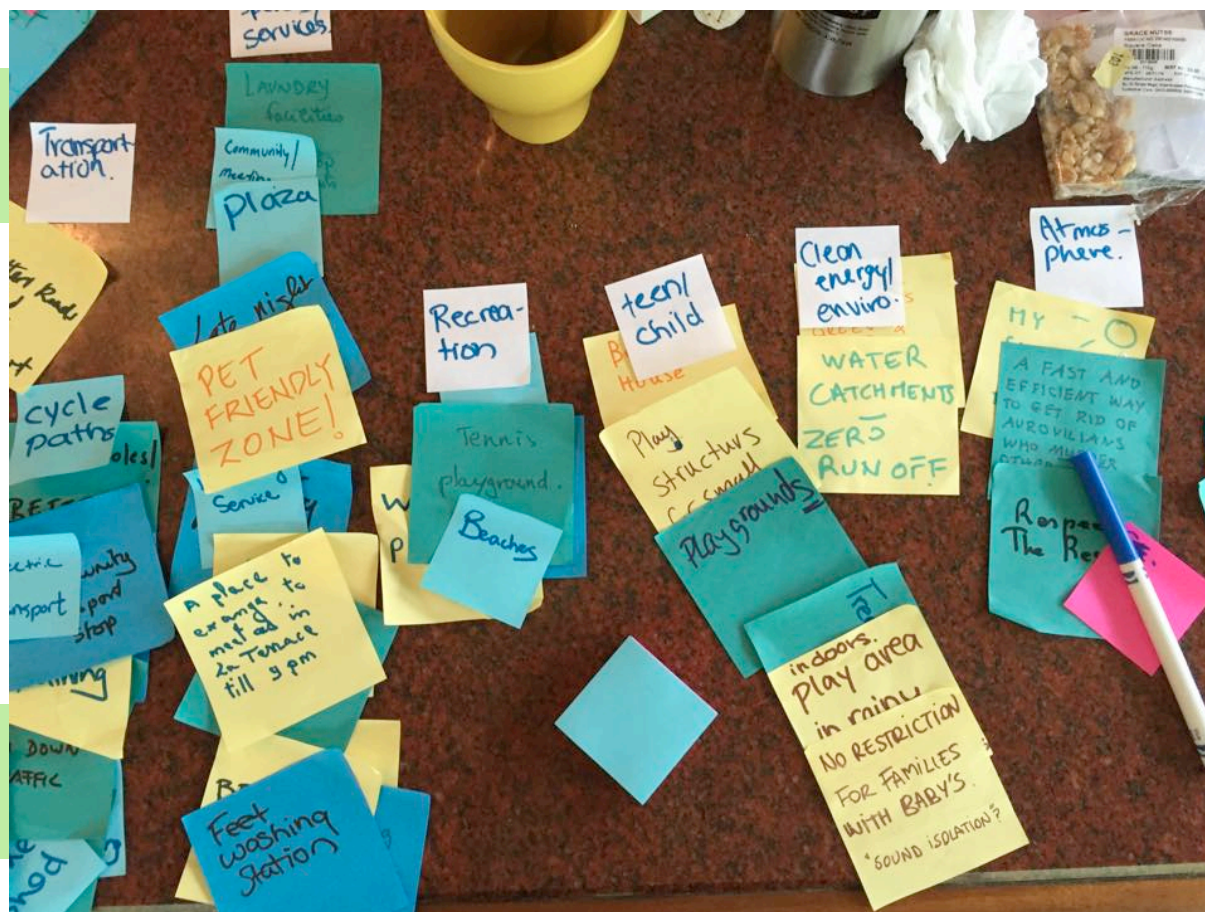


Example of a residential building in Auroville

4.5 Conclusion

The community participation framework created for Auroville is intended to be a detailed step-by-step process. Each of the seven steps should be completed in the order they appear in this document to allow for the implementation of an intuitive process. It is this report's hope that at each step of the process, community participation organisers discover new and additional information to help the framework grow organically. Figure 4.4 provides a summary of how each stage of the framework works individually and in conjunction with each other.





Section 5



The Pilot Study

5.1 Introduction to the Proposed Pilot Study

In order to develop a framework informed by real-world planning processes, our client provided us with a local pilot study. By applying the proposed framework to the study, we were able to test the effectiveness of the framework and work out possible implementation challenges. L'Avenir d'Auroville provided the subject matter for the pilot project. L'Avenir asked us to investigate what features Aurovilians envision in Residential Sectors 1 & 2. We used the proposed framework to develop a participation plan that would help the community answer that question.



Tables set up at the information kiosks as part of the pilot study

5.2 Applying the Framework to the Proposed Pilot Study

While in Kingston, we went through the steps of our framework to develop a preliminary community participation plan for the pilot study, despite our lack of detailed information at the time. We presented this plan to a group of Aurovilians upon arrival in order to gather local feedback on our report, as well as opinions on the feasibility of our proposed techniques. We also conducted a number of interviews that allowed us to further refine our framework and adapt the community participation techniques that we had selected. The following section shows how the framework was applied to the pilot study and produced a community participation plan that took into account local context. The exercises we conducted in Auroville were part of what should have been a larger participation plan. Due to time constraints we could only implement a portion of what was required. In reality, such a project would likely take 4-6 months.

5.2.1 Setting Intentions

As the project team, our intentions are to showcase how a community participation framework can work. The project team is not a decision-making body. Instead, the project team will provide the community, the Sustainability Institute, and the RAS with the tools for more effective engagement. By making these tools available, we believe that community participation in Auroville will be more productive and representative of the community.

As part of the framework the project team answered the following questions:

1. What are you hoping to achieve from the participation process?

Our first intention is to demonstrate how our framework can be effective by showcasing it through the pilot project.

Our second intention and that of L'Avenir, was to identify what community features Aurovilians want in Residential Sectors 1 & 2.

Our third intention is to pass all of the information gained from this project to L'Avenir so that they may decide which community features will be incorporated into Residential Sectors 1 & 2.

2. What outcome would be considered successful?

The project team will consider the pilot project successful if the following happens:

- a. A decision is made and implemented as a result of the pilot project.
- b. The participation results meaningfully impact the final project outcome.
- c. The participants of the process feel like they have been heard and represented.

3. What type of information should be collected from the participants?

The following feedback should be collected from participants:

- a. The community features desired.
- b. The community's opinion on the impact and implementation of these features.
- c. The general importance of the identified features to the community.

5.2.2 SWOC Analysis

The project team completed a SWOC analysis using input from the Auroville community that was acquired during our first focus group. This tool is important because it allowed the project team to identify a variety of internal and external factors, which helped to identify interested and impacted groups. The SWOC analysis also allowed the project team to better incorporate the local context into the participation process by considering the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges.

Table 5.1: Pilot Study SWOC Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents' Assembly is available to help with community participation Little built form in the space allows for creativity The community is vocal about their desires Existing underutilised spaces e.g. terraces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of collectivity Poor access and connectivity Few residents rely on walking A lack of gathering spaces
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned to be high density Opportunity to create spaces for socialisation Opportunity to create more walkable communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of change Sporadic development of built form Conflict between creation of social space and concerns about noise

5.2.3 Identify Impacted and Interested Groups

Interested individuals and groups must be included at the beginning of the process to ensure a fair and representative engagement. Analysis of interested groups was completed at the beginning so that the pilot project could incorporate and identify as many different groups as possible.

The project team also used the analysis to brainstorm how various groups might be affected. This tool was used to evaluate groups on a variety of factors including proximity to the area, how they may be impacted, needs, and their resources. Additional interested groups were added to the list as they came forward or were identified by the project team.



Information kiosks set up at the Solar Kitchen as part of the pilot study

Table 5.2: Pilot Project Impacted and Interested Groups

#	Group or Individual	How are they Impacted?	Geographic Proximity to the Project	Expected level of Interest in the Project?	Needs/Accessibility Concerns	Resources/Skills
1.	Nearby Residents	Construction, changes to lifestyles, view from house, features for kids/adults	High	High	Respectful development, to be heard,	Local knowledge
2.	Commuters through Sectors 1 and 2	cannot move through construction, could allow paths for better movement, buildings may change movement	High-low	High	Need alternatives for other routes, know about construction, and know how it may impact their commutes	Walking paths and the best routes to move through this area
3.	Potential business managers	Could allow infrastructure for these to exist	High	Medium	Need space that meets requirements, and a large enough population	Business demand in area and how to create successful spaces
4.	Residents of Auroville	Increased quality of recreational land, temporary movement to other parks	High	High	Development meets citizens needs	Local knowledge, past history,
5.	Sustainability Institute	Need to be involved to provide guidance on sustainability standards and past projects	High-low	Medium	All development is compliant to standards	Environmental information, knowledge of construction / water/ etc.
6.	Town Development Council	Increased workload	High-low	High	A decision that most Aurovilians can agree to, a process that is fair/reasonable	Potential projects, feasibility, process, how things are typically developed
7.	Residents' Assembly Services	Potential of an increased workload	High-low	High-medium	A process that fits within their ability to perform services	Process, legal requirements, bureaucratic

5.2.4 Choose Types of Engagement

The project team used a variety of Tell and Listen techniques throughout the entire process so that we could continually inform the community about the project and collect their feedback. These processes were extremely important for encouraging turnout at events and for establishing legitimacy among the community.

Only a few Discuss level techniques were incorporated because they required more time and resources and are generally more appropriate in the later stages of the process. Therefore, the project team focused on Tell and Listen techniques because we were primarily involved in the beginning stages of the process. However, activities like the focus group and the workshop allowed participants to discuss and think in terms of trade-offs about community features. This allowed the project team to narrow community features according to desirability and feasibility.

The project team chose not to incorporate Working Together techniques into the pilot study. The application of Working Together techniques requires a level of community partnership and decision-making capacity beyond what the team could accomplish over a two-week period. Since the project team is not a decision-making body, this engagement type was inappropriate for the given project.

5.2.5 Choose Techniques

The project team chose a variety of techniques spanning the Talk, Listen, and Discuss engagement categories to ensure a thorough participation process. By incorporating a variety of different techniques, the project team was able to interact with many people across many different backgrounds and gain diverse perspectives. This helped encourage community members who do not usually participate to get involved with the pilot project and each technique frames the issue in a different way.

Due to the time constraints, we were unable to incorporate all of the techniques that we desired. However, we were able to incorporate a variety of different techniques across three different engagement types.

Auronet:

The project team used Auronet to inform the community about project intentions and upcoming engagements.

Auroville Interviews:

A total of 11 interviews were conducted with interested and impacted groups. These interviews focused on understanding the needs and concerns of these various groups and ensuring that their thoughts and ideas were included in the pilot project. Including these engagements was integral to fulfilling the Be Proactive and Be Inclusive guiding principles of the framework. These interviews were semi-structured and the project team tailored questions to the participant, but also asked additional questions if there was an opportunity.

Information Kiosks:

Informal information kiosks were set up at the PTDC in the morning and at the Solar Kitchen over lunchtime. These locations were selected because of their considerable and diverse foot traffic. Participants were given the opportunity to write any community feature they wanted to see in Residential Sectors 1 and 2 on a sticky note and post it on a board. The information kiosks were excellent tools for collecting broad feedback from members of the community who may not participate in other events. This is due to their convenient, fun and quick nature.

Open House Kiosk:

The open house kiosk operated in the same manner as the information kiosks but was held at the Hall of Light, Creativity in Residential Sector 2. This location was intended to capture less foot traffic and to be attended intentionally. This format also allowed participants to engage in longer conversations with the project team. Placing the open house in the Residential Sector was to make participation more accessible for local residents.

Flyers:

The project team handed out flyers to participants at both kiosks informing them about the upcoming workshop event. This technique was used to create excitement about the event and try to increase turnout.

Posters:

Posters were also created and placed in various community spaces in Auroville to inform residents about the upcoming workshop event.

Youth Focus Group:

The youth focus group was initially intended to be an interactive mapping workshop. However, the project team amended this technique to a focus group after gauging the audience and determining what would be of more interest. The questions were unstructured and directed towards identifying wants, priorities and feasibility of community features in the Residential Sector.

Online Survey:

While not initially planned, an online survey was conducted at the request of the RAS. The survey assessed the level of community acceptance of the features identified in the previous methods. The information kiosks had only been partially analysed at this point; therefore the survey contained a list of only the features identified until that point. The list missed a select few features, such as a women's centre and various health and educational services. Participants were asked to select the community feature they envisioned in Residential Sectors 1 and 2 from the list that was suggested by community members at the Sound Board Kiosks. Participants were informed that the list was a work in progress.

Workshop / Open Spaces / Dot Democracy:

The project team held an interactive workshop inviting Aurovilian to discuss community features that they would like to see in Residential Sectors 1 & 2. The workshop used a variety of Tell, Listen, and Discuss engagement techniques to increase knowledge capacity and gain in-depth feedback. The workshop was located at the Unity Pavilion and was selected for its central location, positive atmosphere and history of being a community participation venue. Transportation was also provided to increase accessibility.

Participants were first given a quick introductory presentation about the pilot project, the framework, and the workshop itinerary. Attendees were then asked to participate in a dot democracy event where they would select the topics that would be discussed at the workshop. The project team incorporated previous surveys, interviews, and kiosks to select the thirteen broad topics that would be voted on. Each individual was given three stickers and asked to vote for three different topics.

After the four different topics were selected, participants were asked to engage in an open spaces activity. During this activity, attendees could move between any of the tables at any time and engage in conversation. If participants had fully expressed their opinions or grew bored of a topic they were encouraged to move to a different table. Facilitators were used to help guide the conversation, write main points on chart paper, and ensure that attendees identified community features they would like to see in Residential Sectors 1 & 2. Each table also had a note taker that recorded the conversation at the table. When the open spaces event concluded, each facilitator described the discussion of their respective topic to the entire room. The workshop then concluded with an exit survey and presentation from the head facilitator.



Images of the workshop that was put on by the Project Team as part of the Pilot Study

5.2.6 Communicate and Implement the Plan

Informing the community about the plan is important for making the process accessible and transparent. During this stage, the project team used a variety of different techniques to communicate the plan and its intentions to the community of Auroville. These activities included posting information and invitations to events on AuroNet, posters in community hubs, handing out flyers, and asking interview participants to inform their own communities regarding our upcoming events. Invitations and information should have been provided to the community further in advance to allow the community a chance to think about our project and attend our events.

If successfully implemented, the pilot study would present a transparent and respectful participation process to the Auroville community. The project team kept track of its commitments for the pilot project so that any required changes would be made in a timely fashion. The team implemented the public participation plan by delivering an online survey, holding a youth focus group, having two information kiosks, an open house information kiosk and hosting a workshop. However, techniques were adapted if an event was proven to be unsuitable, as occurred during the youth focus group. Flexibility throughout the implementation stage is imperative, as unforeseen obstacles are always a possibility.

5.2.7 Evaluate and Monitor the Community Engagement Process

The framework explains the importance of evaluating and monitoring any community participation plan. This means, ensuring that feedback is gathered, reported on, and that the whole participation process is evaluated and monitored in the long-term. During the pilot study, the project team undertook a number of steps to ensure that this was accomplished. The team collected feedback from the participants on the engagement techniques that were used during the pilot study, as well as the overall Framework developed thus far. The project team provided this information to the community groups involved in the pilot study. The team was also able to evaluate the work done to date on the framework, including the effectiveness of each step as well as the level of community satisfaction with the types of techniques suggested. To gather feedback

about the participation events held by the project team, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed. Formal written feedback was gathered from the community regarding their level of satisfaction with the process, as well as with the techniques used in the final workshop. The results of this exit survey were important to understanding how future participation events could be improved. Additionally, event facilitators tracked participant numbers and the general attitudes at the events. These results were synthesised with the data collected from participants. This step allows the project team to remain adaptable and to actively incorporate the preferences of the community into the project. The feedback the project team received informed our recommendations for next steps which can be viewed in subsequent sections.

Reporting is another important step to the evaluation and monitoring process. The community input gathered from the participation events, on the topic of “What community features do you envision in Residential Sectors 1 & 2?” was synthesised and turned into a report that was returned to participants. The summary report explained how the project team incorporated the feedback from the community into the framework and pilot project, the main take away points at each engagement, and what we learned as a result of those participation events. The participants will also be invited to read the final project report once it is completed. Community input from the participation events was organised and presented to the Auroville community to ensure respect and transparency to the participants. The framework describes the



Summarising the findings from the open spaces activity

5.3 Outcomes and Lessons from the Pilot Study

importance of monitoring a community participation plan. To ensure this was included in the pilot study, monitoring was established as an ongoing goal throughout the participation process as a way of evaluating the plan's performance. Moving forward, the RAS, the Integral Sustainability Institute, and L'Avenir will monitor how the framework is used in Auroville. It is recommended that another survey be sent to the community asking questions about the effectiveness of the framework, and how it has been used. This survey should be sent out approximately six months after the final report has been delivered. The goal of the survey is to facilitate a critical analysis of the framework by those who will be implementing the participation process. This information will help decision-makers discover which aspects of the framework have been successful and which may need adjusting to better fit the Auroville context. The team developed a framework embedded with flexibility so that it may be adjusted to meet future needs of the community.

5.3.1 Outcomes from Individual Methods

1. Interviews

Participants identified the following community features during the interviews:

- Women's centre
- Office space
- Collective Space, e.g. communal kitchen, communal laundry
- Semi-public space; public space for a specific community, hangout places within communities (especially at night)
- Daycare
- Nursing Home
- Dispensary
- Recreation grounds/parks
- Swimming pools
- Walkable neighbourhoods
- Music hall

2. Youth Focus Group

The themes from the focus group focused on safety, transportation, entertainment, recreation, gathering space, and green space.

- Night-time safety: Street lights and safe common spaces
- Transportation: More walking paths with better connections, improved road maintenance and public transit
- Entertainment: Shops, star gazing, music building, cinema, Wi-Fi
- Recreation: Swimming pools, sports fields, and a basketball court
- Gathering Space: (Sound-proof) Tree houses, benches

3. Information Kiosks/Open House Kiosk

Kiosks at the PTDC, Solar Kitchen and Creativity in the Residential Zone yielded over 140 responses. The tone and content of comments varied with some being positive and hopeful, while others were more critical of the community. Results were categorised according to four main themes, consisting of 12 sub-themes. The following two tables depict the results from all three of the kiosks. The first table displays the frequency of the themes and sub themes. The second table displays the most frequently requested community feature.

Table 5.3: Frequency of Themes and Sub-themes

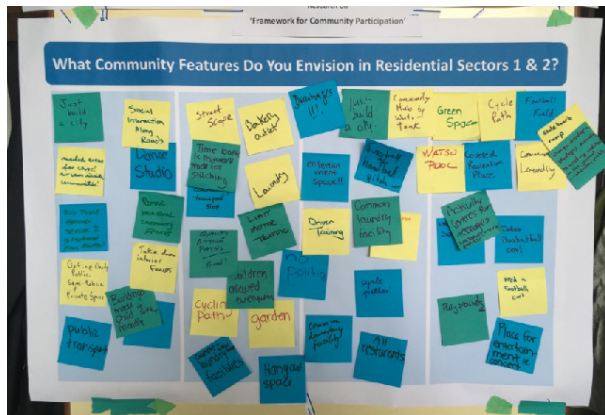
Theme	Sub-theme	# of Responses
Common Space		32
	Parks/Green Space	7
	Multi-use Common Space	14
	Public Private Divide	5
	Other Dedicated Space	6
Services		30
	Retail	13
	Community Services	17
Entertainment/Recreation		40
	Entertainment/Artistic Space	9
	Recreation Space	17
	Space for Youth	14
Mobility		39
	Roads	14
	Active Transportation	25

Table 5.4: Most Frequent Responses

Community Feature	# of Responses
Laundry	10
Cycling Paths	8
Swimming Pool	7
Green Space	6
Community Transit	6
Café	5
Bike Parking	5



Cue cards gathered from focus groups and the information kiosks as part of the pilot study



5.3.2 Qualitative Analysis of Emerging Themes and Sub-Themes

1. Common Space

a) Parks/Green Space

Participants' responses for parks and green space were relatively straightforward. Most responses of this nature simply asked for green spaces to remain, but often did not identify what those spaces could look like.

b) Multi-Use Common Space

This sub-theme ties in with requests to create a community hub. Responses revolved around the desire for a common social space, such as a plaza or meeting centre, especially for evenings. The provision of exhibition/market space was another common response.

c) Public-Private Divides

These responses involved taking down community fences and building a single fence around the entire residential zone.

d) Other Dedicated Space

Suggestions here included a pet friendly zone and a silent space.

2. Services

a) Retail

Participants focused on retail services that also acted as social spaces including cafés, bakeries, and restaurants. Responses often envisioned these spaces open at night. Other responses included a PT outlet, ATM, time bank and tanning salon.

b) Community Services

Responses were dominated by the desire for laundry facilities, which was the most popular requested feature at the kiosk. Also included in these responses was a BBQ pit, foot washing station, work/office space, Wi-Fi space, feedback box and a speaker's corner to provide a place for recorded feedback and expression.

3. Entertainment/Recreation Space

a) Entertainment/Artistic Space

These responses included spaces to play music, practise dance and art, and showcase talents.

b) Recreation Space

Swimming pools and football fields were the two most desired community features requested at the kiosks. However, a recreational facility, a beach, space for handball, a space for skateboarding, a basketball court, and a tennis court were requested as well. Parents and youth most often requested these recreational spaces.

c) Space for Youth

Two predominant sub-themes emerged from the topic of space for youth. The first sub-theme centered around spaces for young children where playgrounds and tree houses were a common response. The second sub-theme focused on spaces for teenagers where hangout places, specifically pool tables and movie theatres, were requested. Teenagers also desired soundproof spaces and spaces that they could use during the night. Indoor space was dominant in both sub-themes and was requested to protect children and teenagers from various weather events.

4. Mobility

a) Active Transportation

This sub-theme discussed improving community transportation, especially cycling features like paths and parking. Respondents also discussed a need for benches along paths, more developed path networks, and paths that connect through communities.

b) Roads

Common responses for this sub-theme involved the restriction of cars in the residential zone and placing parking spaces in periphery areas. Community features for pedestrians were also commonly requested along roads including benches, spaces for social interaction, and streetlights for safety at night. A response also asked for a community hub located at a central intersection. Road maintenance was also a feature raised by participants.

5.3.3 Online Survey Responses

The online survey is found in its entirety in Appendix B. Table 5.5 displays the top 20 community features envisioned for Residential Sectors 1 & 2.

Table 5.5: Online Survey Responses: Community Features Envisioned for Residential Sectors 1 & 2

Community Feature	Count
Cycling Pathways	60
Parks/Green Space	54
Pathways	38
Children Playground	31
Bakery	28
Building Maintenance & Repair Centre	28
Café	28
Laundry	28
Multi-Use Common Space	26
Art Space	24
Swimming Pool	24
Hangout Space for Young People	22
Snack Corner	22
Old Age Care Centre	21
Plaza	21
Social Interaction Space along Roads	21
Post Office	20
Intercultural Exchange Centre	17
PT Outlet	17
Exhibition/Market Space	16
Restaurant	16
Camp Fireplace	15
Childcare Facilities	14
Covered Recreation Space	13

5.3.4 Workshop Responses

Overall, 19 individuals participated in the 3-hour workshop that was held at Unity Pavilion. These individuals used the dot democracy technique to choose 6 themes, out of 13, that would be the focus of the workshop discussions. The original 13 topics were mainly generated from information gained from the information kiosks; however, the Resident's Assembly Services and the TDC also recommended that Health Services be added to the list of themes.

The topics that were chosen in the dot democracy are listed below:

- a. Entertainment/artistic space*
- b. Multi-use common space*
- c. Community services
- d. Roads*
- e. Active transportation*
- f. Space for youth

*Due to their similarities, Entertainment/Artistic Space and Multi-Use Common Space were grouped at the same table, as were the themes Roads and Active Transportation.

5.3.4.1 Workshop Key Points

1. Entertainment/Artistic Space

One of the main sub-themes of entertainment/artistic space was the need for soundproof space because existing facilities are not noise cancelling and must be closed at night. Participants believed that if a soundproof facility were created it could be used 24/7; however, there was some concern whether it could remain in use throughout the day. Debate occurred about whether this type of space belongs in the cultural or residential zone; generally, there was consensus that there is a need for it in the residential zone, although caution should be taken regarding soundproofing. One suggestion was to put it right between the two zones or on the crown. It was also requested that that wood flooring would be better for dancers as existing facilities generally have concrete floors.

The need for intimate performing space also emerged during the workshop. Participants discussed how small intimate spaces, similar to pubs with live music, would be a feature they would like to see. These amenities would ideally be connected to a restaurant or snack bar.

2. Multi-Use Common Space

Participants identified a variety of different multi-use common spaces that they would like to see in Residential Sectors 1 & 2.

Plaza:

The creation of a plaza was an idea that was discussed in detail. These spaces would allow different types of social activities by having both open and covered areas with seating. The participants agreed that this space would not belong to any group in particular and should be located in a central area to be shared. This feature should not be a series of shops but could be located nearby shops and services.

Hierarchical Common Space:

Participants wanted a distinction between public and private space to be clear. Differences should be clear between small neighbourhood space, green space, and large community space.

A Social Cultural Lounge:

This was suggested as a possible community feature. This space would be similar to Aurovelo by operating as a unique and informal place for Aurovilians to interact. Participants wanted the primary use of this feature to be cultural and the secondary use to be a café. It was also suggested that instead of a café, the lounge could be connected to a library.

Co-Working Space:

Participants identified that a co-working space that was connected to various learning-related services like a library or internet café would be a useful place for community members to work. This space could have a shared working area that would make working in Residential Sectors 1 & 2 more convenient.

Women's Centre:

This centre could be a valuable place for women from different cultural backgrounds including Tamil women. Learning could be focused on issues and topics important to women. This could be a casual space where women could gather, socialise, and learn outside of a classroom. This space could also function as a temporary drop-in centre for women in crisis. Participants also suggested that Creativity Kitchen could be a good place for this use.

Accessibility/Safety:

This theme emerged from a conversation addressing the need to accommodate the aging population. Various safety features like stairway railings, removing individual fences, and the municipality maintaining common space and gardens were identified.

General (Multi-Use Common Space):

Organic Growth vs. Planning: Workshop participants came to the consensus that spaces should arise from an organic need rather than being pre-planned. However, the group agreed that anticipating future needs was also necessary.

Mixed-Use in Auroville:

Participants commented that Auroville is a place for people to relax and be spiritual. Work as a concept does not exist in the same way, so participants felt mixed-use does not quite apply.

3. Community Services

The general feeling was that more services should be moved to the residential area so that they were closer to users. The crown road was identified as an ideal location to reduce traffic concerns.

Community Services - Most Popular Options:

Shared Tool/Handyperson Centre:

This was broadly identified as one of the most important community features in this theme. A consensus was formed that this could be partially implemented by moving Mahasarasavati to the residential area. The crown road or Samasti's Garage were identified as potential

locations. It was acknowledged that there could be funding challenges or potential difficulties in finding individuals to operate such a centre.

Computer Services:

This was identified as another service which would be beneficial to move to the Residential Sector. The possibility of moving the "Bobby-Blue Light" service was discussed.

Communal Laundry:

This was identified as a highly desired feature but there was some minor disagreement over hygiene and maintenance issues.

BBQ Centre/Fire Pit:

Participants generally thought this was a needed evening social safe space for what is considered a pleasant time of day. It would also provide a much needed place for youth. However, there was some disagreement as some felt that such a service should be by the Solar Kitchen as per the Galaxy Plan.

Community Services - Most Feasible Options:

The following features were identified as the most likely to be implemented:

Opening Creativity Kitchen to a Breakfast Bar:

The group felt that Creativity Kitchen was underutilised and could create social benefit by using it as a breakfast bar to be potentially operated by Lieve.

Wi-Fi Hot Spots:

Both Creativity Kitchen and the library were identified as potential locations.

Feet Washing Stations:

These were seen as needed, affordable and having little opposition to their implementation.

Multimedia Library:

This was envisioned as moving to adjacent the library as an extension.

4. Roads/Active Transportation

Collective Mobility/Public Transportation:

Participants discussed how travel within Auroville should move away from personal modes of transportation to collective modes. Need was identified for accessible transit for within Auroville and to other nearby cities like Pondicherry and Chennai. Some Aurovilians suggested that the municipality should examine how much money is being spent on taxis and whether or not that money could be diverted into public transit. This service would ideally be accessible for all Aurovilians. However, the feasibility of public transit in Auroville was debated. Participants agreed that personal modes of transportation created issues for children and the elderly. Discussion also focused on how only renewable transportation should be allowed within Auroville to incorporate the teachings of the Mother.

Cycling:

A major discussion point of this topic was cycling in Auroville. There was mixed discussion on the condition of cycle paths with some participants believing they are beautiful and well maintained while others thought they are in need of heavy repair. Destruction of cycle paths by motorbikes and mopeds was identified. Participants agreed that lighting for cycle paths could be improved by having more solar lights that are closer together. All participants agreed that cycling at night was a safety concern. More bike pumps and repair stations were recognised as a need in the community. Debate also arose around whether paths should go through communities connecting them or if they should go around communities. Some individuals believed that these paths created safety and noise concerns while others preferred the increased interconnectivity.

5. Spaces for Youths

Three main ideas came from the discussion over spaces for youth. First, was a need for dedicated youth space. It was felt that the space should be multifaceted with many activities such as education, café and games. This space should be in a hub near/in the Residential Sector and also include spaces for small children, such as a daycare. A mix of cultures, age groups and generations should be encouraged to use and interact within these spaces and it was expressed that money should not be a limiting factor. Second, there was a desire for an open forum between youth and adults regarding fundamental issues. This was identified as a meaningful way to generate additional solutions to the lack of youth space and seriously consider feasibility of those solutions. Third, youth also need intimate space and not just areas for activity. These spaces would be a more “cosy” space for quieter activities, particularly during the rainy season.



The project team hard at work at Afsanah



An information kiosk set up outside the Solar Kitchen as part of the pilot study



Image of the Township

5.4 Conclusion: Overall Themes and General Findings

Mobility was a popular theme throughout the participation process, ranking near the top in the kiosks, survey and workshop. The intention to reduce car-dependency was a focal point of the feedback, but was seen as being a long-term vision. Alternatively, the improvement of cycling infrastructure was broadly supported by participants and considered feasible in the short-term. Specifically, improvements to cycle paths were considered feasible in regards to improvements in establishing stronger path connectivity and safety through the use of street or path lighting.

In general, the participation results displayed a community vision for a greater mix of uses within the Residential Sectors 1 & 2. The need to provide more services, entertainment, and places for social interaction were repeated themes throughout the process. For services, residential support and laundry facilities received broad support. The creation of cafés was also a common feature requested and were seen as focal points for social interaction and entertainment. The most common requests point towards a larger societal desire for the creation of community nodes. These requests are services that lend themselves to the creation of social spaces during the day and night. A community hub can also increase safety since concentrated social spaces that provide a variety of services, reduce Aurovilians' need to travel far distances at night. Additionally, community hubs would also provide space for young people, a needed space that was frequently identified by participants as lacking in Auroville. Specifically, a swimming pool was identified as a possible space for young people. The above mentioned features were frequently voiced by the majority of participants, but a smaller number voiced concerns over the potential issues of noise and traffic that could result from the provision of community features.

It should be stressed that due to time and resource limitations, the implemented stages of the pilot project hardly are indicative of a complete community participation plan. The work done does, however, provide foundational information and a good starting point for implementing further collaborative decision-making regarding this topic. Our team's suggestions for the next steps and advice on how to harness and utilise the information gathered is further discussed in Chapter 6.



Poster at the workshop as part of the pilot study



Section 6



Lessons, Recommendations & Concluding Thoughts

Introduction to Lessons, Recommendations and Concluding Thoughts

After months of research and 13 days in Auroville, our team has produced a report that will help to guide the future of community participation in the township of Auroville. Extensive background research on participation frameworks and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from Auroville allowed us to develop a comprehensive framework that is suited to local needs. The pilot study we conducted while in the town allowed us to test the framework, which further informed our report.

Over the course of our time in Auroville, we ran into a number of difficulties that needed to be addressed. These challenges further strengthened our framework and allowed us to refine our recommendations. This chapter consists of four sections: 1) how the framework has changed and recommendations for implementation, 2) our experiences with the pilot study, 3) potential sources of error, and 4) general concluding thoughts.



A theme discussed at the workshop as part of the pilot study

6.1 Framework

6.1.1 How the Framework Evolved

After a presentation of our framework and a focused discussion with a number of key informants, it became clear that we needed to alter the framework to make it clearer. To achieve this, we edited the framework to lay it out in a step-by-step manner. This meant going beyond explanations of the seven framework steps to ensure the sub-steps were also easy to follow. A number of sections were added to the report as a result of this realisation, including sections outlining, “What is a framework” “Who is this framework for” as well as a section about determining when community participation is required and what level of engagement is appropriate for a given project. We also changed the wording of the document to plain language. For example, the types of engagement were renamed to “Tell”, “Listen”, “Discuss”, and “Work Together” rather than the more technical “Inform”, “Consult”, “Involve”, and “Collaborate”.

We discussed various techniques for public consultation during our interviews with Aurovilians. These conversations made it apparent that not everyone in Auroville wants to be engaged the same way. For example, informal conversations were perceived as more desirable than planned activities for youth. Similarly, some groups expressed discomfort with participating in public meetings. We heard during our interviews that one-on-one conversations, which specifically seek input from under-represented groups, would also be appropriate. Therefore, we expanded the “Choosing Techniques” section to better reflect the importance of using a variety of participation techniques to improve the likelihood of hearing from diverse groups. From our interviews, we also heard that public meetings often go in circles and lack a focused discussion or a clear path of action after the meeting. Accordingly, a section that includes tips for effective facilitation was added to the framework.

Throughout our time in Auroville, we have received extensive feedback on the framework. This, combined with our own experiences during the pilot study, has led us to build on it extensively. The final version

synthesises our background research, feedback from Aurovilians (through interviews, surveys and our participation events) and our personal experiences during this project. As a result, we are confident in presenting the final version of the framework to Auroville. Interpreting, implementing, and adapting the framework are next steps to be accomplished by the town’s planners and community members.

6.1.2 Recommendations

As detailed in Chapter 4, our framework is a 7-step process that can be applied to any planning project in Auroville. Our research indicated a strong tendency towards participatory action by Aurovilians, but a lack of consistency and continuity in its practice. A participation framework could standardise the way planners interact with residents and contribute to re-establishing trust. If our framework was adopted by L’Avenir d’Auroville and the TDC as the default method for engaging Aurovilians, it could lead to an invigoration of collaborative planning as well as a smoother development process as obstructionism would decrease. It is key that the framework is used and understood by those implementing it. This means that greater cooperation between various working groups will be needed for it to become an effective tool. In particular, the framework could work as a linking step between the RAS and L’Avenir/TDC.

Given the decentralised nature of governance and development in Auroville, we also recommend that the framework be made available in an online format. As there are numerous groups from diverse backgrounds enacting change in Auroville, there is a tendency towards inconsistent standards. Existing standards, however, can also be ignored due to Auroville’s non-hierarchical governance structure, which is not conducive to heavy-handed enforcement. Therefore, any participation framework has to be attractive not only to residents but also any individual seeking to develop within Auroville. This means being as transparent and open about the process as possible. If the framework was available as an online tool – on Auronet, for instance – then it would likely gain greater acceptance and legitimacy.

We also recommend that the framework first be used for small-scale projects before it is applied to issues that affect the entire community or are particularly contentious. There are a number of reasons for this: for one, a large-scale or controversial project is inherently riskier to conduct and a failure early on in the process could result in the framework being discredited. The second reason relates to our second principle of building capacity. This means that easing into structured community participation slowly and allowing each new experience to build upon the last will normalise the process and make it a part of planning. Every participation event would theoretically be better than the ones that preceded it. Inaugurating the framework with small, positive events that enhance the sense of community and bring people together is more likely to give people a good impression of the framework and make them more likely to participate in the future.

Finally, as per our seventh principle, the framework itself must be adaptive. While we have tailored it to the local context as much as possible, based on our research, circumstances will invariably change that will require further adaptation. The framework is not meant to be a static tool. It is a starting point to help guide community participation in Auroville. Inevitably, Aurovilians will modify it to suit whichever direction the township's growth and development is taken.



The lush vegetation in the International Zone in Auroville

6.2 The Pilot Study

While our framework continued to evolve, the majority of our time in Auroville was dedicated to conducting the pilot project, the goal of which was to test the effectiveness of our framework. The question we were given involved determining the community features Aurovilians want and need in Residential Sectors 1 & 2. To this effect, we conducted interviews, information kiosks, focus groups and a workshop. Our team collected feedback from residents of these neighbourhoods through these formats in order to reach as wide an audience as possible given our limited time in Auroville. Using multiple methods also allowed us to collect very different kinds of input ranging from very detailed one-on-one discussions, to facilitated conversations, to more general brainstorming.

The culmination of our pilot study was our “Open Spaces” workshop. In preparation, we synthesised the feedback we had previously heard and developed a set of themes for Aurovilians to openly discuss between themselves. From this, more tangible ideas emerged which we were able to reconcile with the broader concepts obtained earlier. After analysing all of this input, we were able to develop a portrait of the sort of features and amenities residents desire in their neighbourhoods.

6.2.1 Recommended Next Steps for the Pilot Study

The data we collected was shared with L’Avenir d’Auroville and the TDC. Our concluding remarks included recommendations for next steps:

1. Clarify and communicate intentions for how this data will be used:

Ideally, this would have been done prior to the start of the participation events. An upfront and transparent dialogue between planners and the community will increase trust and the perception of accountability. If people hear that their input will be used in a certain way

and this is concretely acted upon, they will be more likely to provide feedback in future participation events, thereby building capacity. The next step should involve clarifying why this data was collected, what will be done in the short and long-term future and the ultimate goal of this project.

2. Analyse participation data and synthesise with planning knowledge:

Data from the participation events should be compiled and analysed. This data should then be weighed against the technical knowledge planners can provide. Questions to ask include: which of these ideas are feasible in the short, medium and long term? What are the appropriate locations for the proposed amenities? What physical form might they take?

3. Create an implementation strategy:

After acquiring some knowledge on how to proceed, an implementation strategy should be created. This should take into account feasibility and provide a realistic timeline as well as include opportunities for continued community input.

4. Create a rough draft report that includes information about how participation data was used:

All of the participation data, technical data and implementation strategy should be compiled into a draft report and published. It must be clear to the community exactly how data was used and how each conclusion was arrived at. If popular community input was for some reason not deemed feasible or desirable, this must be clearly communicated. The report should be made available for public viewing and comment. It is in the best interest of the planning office for the community to be fully engaged in the construction of this report as this reduces the chances of future conflict and obstruction.

5. Utilise feedback to refine document into final report:

Community input should be used to generate a final report. Any major sources of conflict must be resolved before a finalised document is presented. As with the original feedback, it should be made clear how participation informed the next stage.

6. Implement the plan:

Finally, the plan should be implemented based on the previously communicated timeline. If any plans change, the strategy should be subject to further community participation. As this implementation may be a long-term project, it is important to continue to inform and update the community. When parts of the plan are implemented, it is a good idea to let participants know so they can identify the tangible results of their feedback.

6.2.2 General Recommendations

In addition to recommendations for the pilot study, we created a list of general recommendations based on the research we conducted for this report:

1. Ensure all events are accessible:

Step 4 of the framework, Choose Techniques, describes that participation techniques must be made accessible. Accessibility is critical to ensuring that community members can have their voices heard. During the pilot study events, the project team noted several barriers to participation faced by participants. For example, the timing of the workshop, which began at 3:00pm on a weekday, meant that school children could not attend. Additionally, the fact that the seating involved floor cushions made the event inaccessible for elderly people. Both these issues represent accessibility barriers to participation. Organisers must be mindful of this and take steps to reduce these barriers.

2. Be transparent throughout the entire process:

The framework stresses the importance of being transparent throughout the entire community participation process. Being clear about a project's process and outcomes allows residents to see how their feedback influences decisions. During the pilot study, we made an

attempt to be transparent at each step, but various limitations meant this was not always possible. In the future, any organiser of a participation event must be mindful of transparency and use all of the tools at their disposal to achieve it.

3. Use a diversity of events, methods, and techniques:

As mentioned in our seventh principle, using a variety of events, methods, and techniques within the same community participation project allows for a diversity of knowledge and information to be transferred from the community to the project team. This was illustrated by our use of information kiosks, interviews, focus groups, online tools, workshop, e-mail, radio interviews, newsletters and posters to achieve successful community participation during the pilot study. In future events, similar structures should be replicated.

4. Be mindful when choosing location and techniques:

Decisions about where to hold community participation events and which participation techniques to employ can influence the data collected from the community. Event location can affect the amount of feedback that is collected. For example, higher levels of foot traffic meant that our kiosk at the PTDC generated considerably more feedback than the kiosk at Creativity. On the other hand, when foot traffic was too high, the atmosphere became chaotic and dissuaded participation, as was the case during our kiosk at the Solar Kitchen. Similarly, the techniques that are chosen influence the style of feedback that is received. Kiosks, for example, can generate feedback from many participants, but to a limited level of detail, whereas workshops often result in feedback from fewer participants, but to a higher level of depth. Workshops themselves can generate wildly different data based on seemingly minor things like time of day, location and style of facilitation. Be mindful of the type of feedback you are looking when selecting participation techniques and event locations.

5. Set roles and intentions:

All relevant groups and parties need to have clearly-defined roles early on in the process. Organisers should transparently communicate what their objectives are, as per Step 1 of the framework. In the conduct of the participation process, we ran into numerous difficulties because roles and intentions were not adequately addressed. For instance,

the TDC informed us that they had hoped to see office space more prominently listed as a potential community features. Had this desire been communicated earlier in the process, we would have been able to better accommodate the request. Setting roles and intentions at the start helps to manage expectations and clarify goals.

As a non-Aurovilian group, we do not have the power to implement the pilot study participation plan. We can, however, provide the tools and data for Aurovilians to do so. We are confident that Aurovilians will be able to continue the work we started and convert it into concrete change in the community.



A beautiful garden at the Unity Pavilion in Auroville

6.3 Potential Sources of Error

While we believe that our overall project in Auroville was productive and that this report contains valid and useful recommendations, it is important to keep in mind certain factors that may have limited the effectiveness of the process.

6.3.1 Collection of Data

Inconsistencies existed during data collection. Interviews were conducted by several different interviewers with varying styles, which could have prompted different answers and interpretations. During the information kiosk, team members initiated conversations with participants in different ways. The responses of participants could have been influenced due to variations in interactions. Similarly, facilitation styles differed between passive and active during the open spaces workshop. Varying styles of facilitation led to difference of focus and direction during the discussion, and as a result, a different organisation of data outputs.

6.3.2 Interpretation of Data

Errors could have also arisen from inconsistent interpretation of data. This bias is mainly applicable to the interpretation of the interview and survey results. This information was mostly qualitative and was interpreted by a large group of individuals. While we attempted to standardise a method of data interpretation, inconsistencies still arose. This was most prevalent during the thematic analysis for both interview and survey data, largely due to the number of people involved in this interpretation.

6.3.3 External Influences

There was a lack of consistency in maintaining the initial plan due to fluctuating demands from various parties. There were numerous agendas on display from a large variety of parties, which occasionally

complicated the goal of our project. Confusion about our roles and objectives emerged a few times, which led to the misrepresentation of information and misunderstandings.

6.3.4 Final Thoughts

As non-Aurovilians, there are particular challenges we faced. A great deal of time was spent on research and ensuring that we proceeded with the utmost sensitivity to local needs. This alone represented an obstacle, as we had to learn what most Aurovilians already intuitively knew. Also, without full background knowledge, we occasionally may have made erroneous assumptions. Due to our lack of access to certain channels of communication, such as AuroNet and various mailing lists, we had to communicate through intermediaries where information may have gotten lost. Finally, it is possible that the perception of us as outsiders may have influenced and alienated some people making them less likely to participate in the pilot project events.



A delicious meal at the Solar Kitchen in Auroville

6.4 Final Thoughts

Auroville is a unique community with a governance, planning, and spiritual structure unlike anywhere the project team has previously visited. These particularities presented an exciting challenge that the team overcame through extensive background research and in-depth conversations with Aurovilians. Upon our arrival in India, we were able to immerse ourselves in the community and continued to learn about Auroville's intricacies. Throughout our two-week visit, our framework evolved as our understanding of Auroville increased.

The final product of our hard work is an easy-to-follow tool that can be used to guide community participation in planning and development projects in Auroville. We are pleased to present a document that celebrates Auroville's unique culture and values. Our wish is that others in Auroville can pick up where we left off and that participatory planning in the community will continue to evolve. We extend our thanks to the community for their hospitality and hope that the relationship between Queen's University and Auroville will continue to be a friendly and enriching one!



The Project Team at the Unity Pavilion in Auroville



P

Section 7



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7.2 Picture References

Unless otherwise noted, all photos are the original work of the project team.

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P. Photo courtesy of Lalit Kishor Bhati



Section 8



Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions Conducted While in Canada

1. Tell us about yourself. (e.g. how long have you lived in Auroville, etc.).
2. How do planning decisions happen?
 - a. What is the power structure of planning in Auroville?
3. How quickly does change happen in Auroville?
4. How much freedom do working groups have?
5. What is the relationship between the planning and Auroville?
6. Tell us about the public consultation process in Auroville, particularly regarding planning or L'Avenir proposals:
 - a. How is information dispensed (intranet emails, newsletter, public meetings), quality of information (too technical, too general, multiple options and scenarios for the same site/project, pros and cons of each, etc.)
 - b. Are there multiple discussions and feedback loops or just a single public meeting kind of consultation; timeframe for public consultation exercises
 - c. Purpose of these consultation exercises (to collect feedback, or to get a vote, or to get a “consensus”).
7. Please tell us about your experience with public consultation in Auroville.
 - a. Please give us an example of a public consultation method that worked well.
 - b. Please give us an example of a public consultation method that did not work well.
8. In your opinion, what could make the consultation conducted within Auroville more effective?
9. In your opinion, is there anything else that would be important for us to know in preparation for developing a framework for public consultation in Auroville?

Appendix B: Online Survey Questions Distributed to the Auroville Community

Perceptions of Public Participation in Auroville

1. Are you involved in the public participation process within planning and development in Auroville?
Yes / No (if yes, why?; if no, why?)
2. Do you agree with the following statement? Most Aurovilians participate in the planning and development process in Auroville.
Yes / No (if yes, why?; if no, why?)
3. When a decision-making body in Auroville seeks public participation, what should be the intention of this public participation?
 - a. Informing the public of an upcoming project
 - b. Informing the public of an upcoming project with the opportunity for them to provide feedback
 - c. Community participation in decision-making
 - d. Community control of decision-making
 - e. Other: (Please provide your own definition) _____
4. Please list 3 key characteristics that must be present in public participation, in order for the process to be successful (i.e. well facilitated meetings):
5. The term “consensus” could have multiple interpretations. Which of the following do you think best describes your understanding of “consensus” as it relates to decisions concerning planning and development in Auroville.
 - a. Everyone is in complete agreement
 - b. Most individuals are in complete agreement, and others are still able to live with the decision
 - c. Most individuals are in complete agreement, and the community should accept the fact that there will always be a few people who disagree
 - d. Those who agree with the decision outnumber those who disagree
 - e. Other (please provide your own definition): _____
6. Are you aware of any existing formal process or requirement for public participation in Auroville (for any formal or informal group)?
Yes/No (if yes, please provide details / link to information)

Techniques for Public Participation in Auroville

7. In your opinion, what is the most effective way to provide information to the public on planning and development proposals?
 - a. Sending out letters
 - b. Sending out emails
 - c. Posting online (e.g. online forum)
 - d. Posting in the newsletter

- e. Community Meeting (e.g. Residents' Assembly)
- f. Informative posters around the community
- g. Door-to-door canvassing
- h. Other (please explain)_____

8. In your opinion, what would be the most effective way to collect information from the public on any planning and development proposal in Auroville?

- a. Online forum / Email-driven survey
- b. Comments submitted as hard copies
- c. Community meeting (e.g. opportunity to speak in the Residents' Assembly)
- d. Interactive workshops
- e. Other (Please explain) _____

9. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges to successful community participation within Auroville regarding planning and development decisions?

Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Differences of opinion of vision, direction and approach
- ☐ The extent to which to the proposed development affects each individual
- ☐ Indifference to planning and development decisions
- ☐ Lack of transparency in how public participation could influence the decision
- ☐ Feedback from the public participation process is not reflected in the final outcome
- ☐ Length of process
- ☐ Decisions are never reached during public participation
- ☐ Lack of information for participants
- ☐ Other (Please Explain:_____)

10. Please provide 3 examples of public participation cases in Auroville that you consider to be the most successful. You may identify the same with project name, participation techniques used, project description, website links- whatever is convenient to provide related information.

11. Please feel free to suggest any techniques to improve public participation for planning and development in Auroville.

12. Please feel free to list any additional concerns you have with the existing public participation process in Auroville.

Appendix C: Community Participation Techniques

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Website Posting and Email Notification Use the intranet to reach out and provide information to residents.	Tell	Time, resource and expertise are required to create and maintain content.	Use plain language and legible font styles. Websites are a useful tool that can make information accessible and available to people who have vision loss, learning disabilities or mobility restrictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to inform community on a large scale about a topic and/or event • This technique will not reach individuals who do not have internet, or are not tech savvy
Newspaper Advertisement, Poster, and Flyer Use to provide information and promote upcoming events or projects.	Tell	Printing costs, design expertise needed and medium time commitment.	Use plain language and eye-catching graphics to grab people's attention. Use colour contrast to improve accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to inform community on a large scale about an topic and/or event
Radio Use media, such as community segments, to present information to a broad audience.	Tell	Consider time needed to prepare for the segment.	Develop tools to measure impact on audience and allow for feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to inform community on a large scale about an topic and/or event

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Tour and Field Trip Tours can be guided or self-guided. Allows groups of residents to tour a specific site and visualise the plan	Tell	Costs of transportation of groups to and from the site. Intensive planning, training and organization needed to run effective tours	Be aware of accessibility needs, such as accessible venues and mobility restrictions of possible participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours and field trips give the ability to provide information about an upcoming project and/or plan • This technique assists in developing a common understanding of a geographic location • Also provides the opportunity to build rapport with interested individuals

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Information Kiosk / Street Stall Kiosks serve as a station where project information is available.	Tell / Listen	Can be minimal in cost if materials are already available or prepared. Heavily dependent on the availability and dedication of staff to maintain and monitor the kiosks.	<p>Kiosks can be permanent or temporary. Kiosks can be utilised to simply provide information, or can be made interactive by combining them with another technique (e.g. dot democracy / choice catalogue), which allows people to provide their opinion on a specific topic without requiring a large time commitment. Technology can make the kiosks interactive and allow for electronic gathering of feedback.</p> <p>Kiosks may be advertised in advance, but this is not necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info kiosks provide the ability to inform the community on a large scale about a topic • They also give the ability to capture a large number and wide variety of thoughts/opinions on a topic • This technique can be particularly useful when seeking opinions of a specific area, especially if the kiosk can be held in the specific area • Also provides the opportunity to build rapport with interested individuals

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Interview Interviews can range from a one-on-one meeting or a small group discussion focused on a specific topic or objective.	Listen	Costs can increase if providing food and travel. Time needed to develop interview questions, gain participants, and analyse the results.	Be polite and neutral. Know your objectives for the interview and provide the interviewee with information beforehand. Come prepared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews provide an individual or expert opinion on a specific topic / issue

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Online Forum An online citizen engagement tool (crowd sourcing) where participants share their opinions and ideas, vote, or comment on proposals	Listen	Costs to prepare are dependent, you may have to hire a web developer to build and maintain your online forum. Time is also needed from staff to monitor and respond to feedback the forum generates.	Think about allowing anonymous comments. Feedback from our survey indicates many in Auroville who feel intimidated by leaving comments. Participation professionals advise that anonymous comments are needed in online forums to prevent personal attacks and to enable diverse feedback. It is best to set a time duration to keep the forum active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives community members the opportunity to discuss topics / issues, to ensure their opinion is heard • Provides physical comments that can be utilised in refining a project / plan • Anonymous forums may provide security to those who might otherwise be afraid to comment, but can also allow for online bullying and this should be monitored • Online forums give individuals the ability to participate on their own time, rather than having to be at a specific place at a specific time

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Survey Online, telephone, mail, in-person, hand-out</p> <p>Useful to obtain data on issues, satisfaction levels, opinions and gauge concerns</p> <p>Work well for needs assessments and satisfaction levels for a representative number of people (a particular group or the entire community).</p>	Listen	<p>It takes time to develop a valid and reliable survey, disperse the survey and analyse the results.</p> <p>Costs are minimal, unless dispersing the survey by mail and then postage (to and from) must be considered.</p>	<p>Determine whether the issue requires statistically valid data or qualitative input, this will dictate the survey's layout.</p> <p>Questions should be worded carefully to ensure their neutrality. Surveys should try to reach a large sample of people to better represent the diversity of opinions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful in obtaining data on issues, satisfaction levels, opinions and to gauge concerns that may otherwise go unheard • May provide a large amount of data about a specific topic that can then be used to help guide the development of a project • Can be utilised when there are time or cost constraints as a mechanism to hear concerns from the wider community, or a specific group of people • When an issue may be contentious an anonymous survey may allow individuals who are otherwise too intimidated to provide their opinion • Gives participants the ability to participate according to their schedule

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Value Tree Structures values, criteria and corresponding indicators of an individual or group into a hierarchy. General values and concerns are placed at the top and specific criteria and indicators at the bottom. A useful instrument in structuring the underlying dimensions of a debate and in linking the general concerns of groups with concrete options.	Listen	Monetary costs are low, however, is staff intensive. Need dedicated and trained staff to conduct interviews, structure the tree, create feedback for the participants and re-evaluate the tree based upon feedback. The end result is a very useful mega-tree that ideally all participants agree upon.	Are contingent on the assumption that generating criteria for evaluating options can be analytically separated from assessing the performance of each option.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final result of this engagement process is a very useful mega-tree that provides a hierarchy of the concerns regarding a specific topic, ideally all participants agree upon the mega-tree hierarchy The interim steps allow for obtaining commentary and opinions regarding the topic
Focus Group Small selected groups that are formed to test ideas, messages and gauge community opinion.	Listen	A facilitator is needed to run the focus group sessions.	Be clear about the objective of the focus group when inviting participants. Allow for insights, perspectives, opinion, ideas and suggestions throughout the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technique provides the opportunity to test key messages before implementing a program

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Dot Democracy or Choice Catalogue Use stickers to allow participants to weigh-in by voting on concepts or ideas that they agree with. Often utilised within another technique.	Listen	A facilitator is necessary. Prepared materials to be voted on and stickers are needed for this activity.	Be clear about the objective of using stickers and how the feedback will be used. Provides immediate feedback to help guide a conversation, gauge the understanding or feelings on an issue and identify priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dot democracy / choice catalogue gives the ability to create a ranked list of concepts / ideas about a specific topic, that can be utilised in developing a project or plan Especially useful in identifying priorities of the community regarding a specific topic

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Open House Materials, plans and exhibits are displayed in a stationary format and the community is invited to tour through. Excellent opportunity to educate, produce a conversation and increase transparency regarding planning development plans.	Listen / Discuss	Preparation of materials, handouts, speakers and displays can be a costly and time-consuming process. Usually more staff intensive than a public meeting.	Information materials should be in plain language and available in a variety of languages. The location of the event should be set-up with several information stations, each addressing a separate issue, to allow for a continuous flow. May be difficult to document community input, or gather a well-rounded perspective. Be aware of the possibility that one voice can dominate a conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Houses provide the opportunity to receive a wide variety of reactions to a specific topic / plan, in a fairly informal manner • Provides the opportunity to respond to questions/ comments about this topic • This technique also provides the opportunity to educate community members about the process and next steps, including how they can further be involved (if applicable)

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Town Hall or Public Meeting An organised large group meeting, usually used to make a presentation and give the community an opportunity to ask questions and give comments. People who attend the Town Hall learn by hearing others' questions and comments.	Listen / Discuss	Costs are usually minimal. Need to consider what type of visual aids you will be using and prepare those. Staff resources are usually minimal, need to prepare, attend and analyse the feedback.	Facilitators need to create an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared. Emotions can be high and one perspective can dominate a discussion if facilitators are unprepared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Town Hall provides the opportunity to respond to questions/ comments about this topic • Town Halls allow face to face interactions • This technique also allows the opportunity to educate community members about the process, and next steps including how they can further be involved (if applicable)

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Open Space A workshop technique where the participants decide on the topics of discussion.	Discuss	Space is needed for people to move freely and mingle. Staff resources are dependent on the number of people who attend, ideally a facilitator for each theme, as well as a note taker.	Most facilitation is very light, just keeping the discussion on topic. More active facilitation may be required if the desired outcome is an action plan to implement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very in depth look at the issues / topics the participants feel are important or relevant regarding a specific plan or project Gives individuals the opportunity to be involved in discussions that interest them

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Citizen Panel A process that gathers a randomly selected and demographically representative panel of willing citizens who carefully examine an issue and propose recommendations.	Discuss	Costs are relatively high. A lot of preparation is required to select, inform, prepare and support a citizen panel from staff.	A panel should provide feedback on more than one issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The output of this techniques is a set of recommendations that can be utilised in the final iteration of a plan / policy document This technique is especially good at ensuring a fair representation of the community and should be considered for larger planning and development projects and community master plans

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
World Café A meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations in response to predetermined questions. Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question.	Discuss	Costs are minimal. Staff require time to prepare effective questions. Facilitators and/or staff note takers are needed at each table.	Room set-up is important. The room should feel conducive to conversation and not as formal as the standard meeting format. The room should be large enough to allow for simultaneous discussions. Think through how to effectively record and display conversation points and how to bring closure to the series of discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of thoughts and opinions on the predetermined questions will be obtained, with the hope of debates that allow community members to reach a common understanding of their unique perspectives Useful when you have specific questions you would like to have community members respond to

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
Group Delphi The major objective is to divide a group of experts into smaller working groups, to compare the judgments of these groups in a plenary session and to identify the areas of uncertainty and dissent among the experts. The more one group deviates from the median of all the groups, the more time is given for them to defend and substantiate their judgment /deviation. This ensures that difference of opinions are not dismissed or based on ignorance.	Discuss	Requires a high amount of commitment from both staff and expert panel participants. Staff must develop a questionnaire, select experts, inform the expert panel, work with the group and evaluate and validate the results.	Incorporate experts with different points of view and diverse disciplines to get a well-rounded perspective. Provide results and the justifications to all the participants to allow for final comments or thoughts to be provided. Results can be peer-reviewed by other experts who did not participate in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group Delphi method allows the facilitators to obtain expert based opinions on a specific topic, in a relatively short period of time Experts try to reach a consensus regarding the opinion of the topic which can be very useful in refining a plan / project

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Advisory Group/ Committee</p> <p>A small group of community members formed to develop a product within a limited time, such as a set of recommendations, policy or proposal. The product is passed through to official decision makers.</p> <p>Findings of independent or diverse interests will have greater credibility.</p>	Work Together	<p>Volunteers on the committee must dedicate substantial time to the process.</p> <p>Staff intensive, requires a lot of support and preparation.</p>	<p>Define the terms and the objective of the committee – what is the time commitment, how will their input be used, etc.?</p> <p>Work with the committees to establish timelines, goals and objectives. This will keep the group members on message and within a timeframe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The output of this technique is a set of recommendations, policies or a plan proposal. The product is passed through to official decision makers. • Allows individuals who are committed to a topic to participate in a very in depth manner to have an impact on the final decision

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Charrette or Design Workshop</p> <p>An intense problem-solving session where a facilitator leads a group of professionals and non-professionals to alternative solutions.</p> <p>Promotes joint problem solving and creative thinking through hands-on activities. Fosters community ownership in solving problems.</p>	<p>Work Together</p>	<p>A high degree of time requirements. Each group requires a facilitator, a note-taker and a mapper.</p> <p>Depending on the workshop activity, materials may be costly. If working with GIS for example, will need to ensure adequate technology is at the location.</p> <p>Can also use creative materials, such as Lego, to decrease the cost.</p>	<p>To make workshops more interactive, conduct both larger group discussions as well as smaller breakout group exercises. Use a structured workshop outline.</p> <p>Produce participants' design ideas in real time using visual techniques, such as GIS, artistic renderings, etc, to help visualise results and make adjustments to ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This technique will result in the creation of physical plan(s) of the subject area, these plans can be utilised in the further development and refinement of the final plan • Community concerns and comments will also be heard via the larger group discussions that can be utilised by smaller groups in developing the plans • Will also provide the ability to educate the public regarding the design process and feasibility of ideas





Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Mapping An effective non-verbal way of finding out how people view their area.</p> <p>Individuals or groups create physical maps of their neighbourhood to understand different points of view.</p> <p>Great way to gather and present site-specific data.</p>	Work Together	<p>Materials are required, but can be relatively cost effective.</p> <p>Mapping can be conducted using basic materials such as pens and paper, or using advanced mapping software.</p>	<p>Provide a framework to focus people's thoughts (e.g. places you visit often, landmarks, places you dislike).</p> <p>Using tracing paper can build layers and combine individual maps to develop a larger perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This technique will result in the creation of physical plan(s) of the subject area, these plans can be utilised in the further development and refinement of the final plan • Facilitators can gain an understanding of community members perspective of the subject area • Will also provide the ability to educate the public regarding the design process and feasibility of ideas

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Citizen Jury A process that gathers a randomly selected and demographically representative panel of citizens for three to five days to carefully examine an issue. As the word "jury" suggests, this group is usually empowered to make the decisions on behalf of the decision-maker and a consensus decision is usually required.</p>	Work Together	<p>Costs are very high, both in regards to money and time. A lot of preparation is required to select, inform, prepare and support a citizen jury from staff.</p>	<p>Involves citizens in developing a thoughtful, well-informed solution to a public problem or issue. Materials should be in plain and accessible language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The output of this technique is generally a decision on a specific issue This technique is especially good at ensuring a fair representation of the community and should be considered for larger planning and development projects and community master plans

Technique Description	Type of Engagement	Capacity Requirements	Tips	Technique Output
<p>Community Planning Event</p> <p>Carefully structured collaborative event at which all interested and affected groups work closely with specialists from all relevant disciplines to make plans for the future of the community.</p> <p>A multi-day workshop that combines a number of techniques, including charrettes, design workshops, town halls, etc.</p>	Work Together	<p>Costs vary immensely from virtually nothing to thousands of dollars; it all depends on the scope of the event.</p> <p>Requires a lot of organization to plan all of the workshops held. Many people would be required to plan and implement this method.</p>	<p>Try to get some documented research and preliminary consultation input prior to an event. Imaginative timetabling is crucial. Link activities with other community events to increase participation levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of this technique is a proposal for action • Especially useful during contentious issues as community members work through a variety of techniques together to develop plans or policies that utilise a wide variety of thoughts and opinions

Appendix D: Exit Surveys

**Thank you so much for attending our community engagement event!
We would appreciate if you would take a moment to provide us with
feedback:**

	 No	 Partially	 Mostly	 Completely
Did you feel this workshop allowed you to express your comments and concerns?				
Do you feel you learned anything at this workshop?				
Did you enjoy this workshop?				

**Please use the space below and on the back of this sheet to
provide any additional comments:**

Appendix E: Event Evaluation Questionnaire

Event Evaluation Questionnaire		No	Partially	Most ly	Complete ly
Project name: _____					
Evaluator's name (provide if you wish): _____					
Evaluator's interest in project: _____					
1.	The community engagement guiding principles were followed (provided on the next page)	1	2	3	4
2.	The intention of the engagement was clearly defined before starting the event?	1	2	3	4
4.	The level of community guidance chosen was appropriate for the specific project?	1	2	3	4
5.	Attempts were made to reach and involve those directly and indirectly affected?	1	2	3	4
6.	The engagement techniques chosen were appropriate for the project?	1	2	3	4
7.	The event outcomes were well communicated to stakeholders?	1	2	3	4
9.	What went well?				
10.	What would you like to see improved for next time?				
Calculate the average and check it against the performance ranges below: 0.0 – 1.0 = Poor 1.1 – 2.0 = Fair 2.1 – 3.0 = Good 3.1 – 4.0 = Excellent					

Appendix F: What We Heard

**This template must be updated after each individual participation event*

Summary of Specific Project	
Who	
What	
Where	
When	
Why	

Evaluation of Individual Event	
Event name and technique used	
Purpose of meeting (talk, listen, etc.)	
Number of attendees	
Overall attitude of attendees	
What we heard	
Next steps	

Summary of The Overall Community Participation Process	
Number of specific engagement sessions	
Online traffic statistics (e.g. number of visits, frequency, duration)	
Attendance at each and all engagement sessions	
Number of written comments received	
General themes of comments	

Appendix G: Invitations and Posters

Community participation – research on the framework

Visiting scholars and students from the Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning studied examples all around the world and came up with a well thought out proposal on how public participation can be organized.

To support the next step – **from theory into reality** - they got the support from L'avenir d'Auroville by identifying a topic on which the new framework of community participation can be taken as an example.

You are invited to participate in identifying future community amenity needs of the Residential Zone sector 1 and 2 (between Grace and Prarthana). These two sectors are under development presently, and it is an appropriate time to envision amenities needed for both short & long terms.

The purpose of these “amenities” is to improve livability of the residential zone, enhance quality of life and foster healthier social interaction. (Example of amenities: Bakery/PT outlet, crèche, common kitchens, laundry service, sport facilities.....)

Schedule of events:

“Sound Board” - collecting feedback:

- Saturday 5th December 2015 at Pour Tous Distribution Center between 10 am - 12 pm & at Solar Kitchen between 12 – 2 pm
- Sunday 6th December 2015 at *Hall of Light* in Creativity Community between 10 am - 12 pm

An Imagining Workshop :

- Tuesday 8th December 2015 in the Unity Pavilion between 3 pm to 6 pm

Please inform if you need us to organize transport for you because of the rain.

Sharing of the final work outcome with the community

- Saturday 12th December 2015, from 4 to 6 pm at MMC.

Enjoy to participate in the next step – from Theory into Reality !

Looking forward to your participation

Love

Inge and Slava from Residents Assembly Service <raservice@auroville.org.in>

Sauro from L'avenir d'Auroville <avenir@auroville.org.in>

Lalit from 'Auroville Integral Sustainability Institute' <sustain@auroville.org.in>

What community features do you want in Residential Zone Sectors 1 & 2 for holistic living experience & enhanced social interaction?

What is a Community Feature?

Any feature or facility that is in a shared space. It could be ...



Laundry Service

A collaborative 'Community Participation' effort by L'avenir d'Auroville & Resident Assembly Service



Spaces for Social Interaction & collective activities



Come & Share your Ideas



Information kiosk

Saturday, 5 Dec
10 AM to 12PM at PTDC &
12 PM to 2 PM at Solar Kitchen

Sunday, 6 Dec
10 AM to 12PM at Hall of Light, Creativity

Workshop on

Tuesday, 8 Dec

3 to 6 PM
Unity Pavilion

Final Presentation

Saturday, 12 Dec
4 to 6 PM
MMC



Who are we?

We are a group of post graduate students from Canada exploring community participation in Auroville & working with RAS & L'avenir d'Auroville.

You are invited to participate in

'Community Participation Workshop'

8th December, Tuesday, 3 to 6 pm @ Unity Pavilion



Over 100 community members (including adults, youth and children) shared their inputs at 3 different locations using 'Sound Board' method

Very interesting mix of diverse needs is emerging as requirement of Community Features/Facilities for Sector 1 & 2

Workshop on 8th December, Tuesday will take these inputs further & provide an opportunity for collective reflection on the ongoing *research on 'Community Participation Framework'*.

Final Presentation on

**12th December, Saturday, 4 to 6 PM,
MMC**

This work is being carried out in the spirit of collaborative learning in association L'avenir d'Auroville, RAS & with active participation of post graduate students of Queens University, Canada & coordinated by Auroville Integral Sustainability Institute.

A collaborative
'Community
Participation' effort by
*L'avenir d'Auroville
& Resident Assembly
Service*

Appendix H: Raw Data

Collected from Information Kiosks

		PTDC	Solar Kitchen	Creativity	Total
Parks/Green Space		5		2	7
	General	4		2	6
	Garden	1			1
Retail		6	7		13
	Café	2	3		5
	Bakery	1			1
	PT Outlet	1	2		3
	Restaurant	1			1
	Time Bank	1			1
	ATM		1		1
	Tanning Salon		1		1
Multi-use Common Space		7	7		14
	Plaza	1	2		3
	Intercultural Exchange Centre	1			1
	Exhibition/Market Space	3			3
	Evening Gathering Space	2	2		4
	Meeting Centre		2		2
	Social Space		1		1
Active Transportation		6	13	4	23
	Cycling Paths	5	3		8
	General Paths	1			1
	Community Transit	1	4	1	6
	Bike Parking		5		5
	Bike Charging		1		1
	Benches Along Paths/Roads			2	2
	Paths Through Communities			1	1

Entertainment/Artistic Space		5	4		9
	General	2			2
	Pool Table		1		1
	Art	3			3
	Dance Studio	1			1
	Art Space	1	1		2
	Music Space	1	1		2
	African Cultural Space		1		1
Space for Youth		7	6	1	14
	General	1			1
	Activity Centre with Pool, Movies	1			1
	Board Game & Snack Corner	1			1
	Sound Proof Music Party Room for Youth	1			1
	Tree House	1	2		3
	Wet Proof Corridors	1			1
	Allow Children Everywhere	1	1		2
	Indoor Play Area		1		1
	Playground		2	1	3
Recreation Space		12	5		17
	Swimming/Watsu Pool	4	3		7
	Football Field	4			4
	Covered Recreation Centre	1			1
	Skateboard Park	1			1
	Basketball Court	1			1
	Handball Court	1			1
	Beach		1		1
	Tennis Court		1		1

Roads		5	6	3	14
	No Cars/Parking at Edges	3	1	1	5
	Social Interaction Space along Roads	2			2
	Better Roads		2		2
	Slow Traffic		1		1
	Street Lights		2		2
	Benches on Roads			2	2
Public Private Divide		5			5
	Remove Community Fences	2			2
	One Fence for Residential Zone	1			1
	Community Hub (by Water Tank)	1			1
	Define Public-Private Space	1			1
Community Services		8	8	1	17
	Suggestion Feedback Box for L'Avenir	1			1
	Free Wi-Fi Centre		1		1
	BBQ/Fire Pit		1	1	2
	Feet Washing Station		1		1
	Speakers Corner (Video Recorded Feedback)		1		1
	Work Space		1		1
	Laundry	7	3		10
Other Dedicated Space			2		2
	Pet Friendly Zone		1		1
	Silent Space		1		1

Infrastructure		1	4	1	6
	AC for a Common Building		1		1
	Admin Building for Service Unit		1		1
	Green Buildings		1		1
	4-6 Storey Buildings			1	1
	Drainage work	1	1		
Grand Total					141

Appendix I: Raw Data from Online Survey

Please select the Community Features you envision in Residential Sector 1 & 2 from the following list which was suggested by community members at the Sound Board Kiosks. Please note that this list is a work in progress and by no means complete.

Community Feature	Count
Cycling Pathways	60
Parks/Green Space	54
Pathways	38
Children Playground	31
Bakery	28
Building Maintenance & Repair Centre	28
Café	28
Laundry	28
Multi-Use Common Space	26
Art Space	24
Swimming Pool	24
Hangout Space for Young People	22
Snack Corner	22
Old Age Care Centre	21
Plaza	21
Social Interaction Space along Roads	21
Post Office	20
Intercultural Exchange Centre	17
PT Outlet	17
Exhibition/Market Space	16
Restaurant	16
Camp Fireplace	15
Childcare Facilities	14
Covered Recreation Space	13

Office Space	13
Dispensaries	12
Tree House	11
Wet Proof Corridors	11
Dance Studio	6
Musical Play Station	6
Transport	5
Business Services	4
Cinema	3
Parking	3
Streetlights	3
Gym	3
Football Field	2
Time Bank	1
Communication and ICITI Kiosk/Hub	1
Community-Based Guesthouses	1
Meditation Space	1
Security Presence	1
Video Library	1
Computer Support	1

